

Commentary

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WHAT TO DO ABOUT National Defense

Eliot A. Cohen

Israel Against Itself Hillel Halkin

How the Cold War Really Ended / Joshua Muravchik

Politically-Correct Baseball / George Weigel

F. Scott Fitzgerald's Third Act / Joseph Epstein

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The State Department vs. America / Midge Decter

Books in Review: Chester E. Finn, Jr. / Daniel J. Silver /
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VOLUME 98 NUMBER FIVE NOVEMBER 1994

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The Jewish Future

I. Judaism & Liberalism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol's article, "Why Religion Is Good for the Jews" [August], impressively takes on Jewish organizations for fighting the wrong battles, and correctly urges them to rethink their priorities. As a case in point, his analysis of the breakdown of the so-called black-Jewish alliance, which he blames on the failure of welfare-state liberalism—with which the Jews are so highly identified—to solve the problems of the inner city, is compelling. Perhaps, however, he goes a little too far when he blames the creation of the urban underclass singularly on "liberal policies." The "strong thuggish component" he refers to among some black university teachers is indeed a frightening development, but I wonder if this phenomenon is not best understood as a reflection of the frustration of so many students and teachers with effecting change in the black condition.

I understand, if I do not completely sympathize with, Mr. Kristol's critique of liberalism, but I fully agree with his chastising Jewish organizations for their mistaken priorities. Jews would be so much better off worrying about what we are and are not doing among and for ourselves than worrying about black militancy, and what Christians may be doing. Although he views the issue through a distracting maze of anti-liberalism, Mr. Kristol is clear in his call for Jews to look inward and get busy educating their young about Jewish traditions and practices. I heartily agree with the course of action he presents, especially with his assertion that the official Jewish community will have to become a lot more Jewish than it is today, and that as a community we must allot the necessary resources to create the schools and colleges needed to stem the tide of intermarriage and total assimilation. His conclusion that Jewish education is the only solution to these problems which amount to the steady disappearance of the American Jewish community is, we can all agree, irrefutable.

Mr. Kristol expertly describes

the important paradox that faces the Jewish community. He calls the United States a wonderful country, which it certainly is, where the dream of equality came true for Jews. Assimilation into the general society, not "continuity," was of course the goal of the vast majority of Jewish immigrants at the end of the last century. It was beyond their dreams that Christians would want to marry their grandsons and granddaughters as they do today. They never could have imagined that the future of Judaism in America could actually be threatened by the blessings and success Jews have enjoyed from being American citizens. Hopefully, many young Jews are beginning to search for their roots and to understand the tradition they come from. However, they will need our help, our time, and resources, if this is to occur on a wide and lasting scale.

EDGAR M. BRONFMAN
President, World Jewish Congress
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

... Irving Kristol sees little hope for demographic survival unless the Jewish community purges itself of the prevailing "liberal ethos," ... which, he charges, has spawned not only a Jewish religious malaise, but is also largely responsible for the fact that "the most blatant and vicious form of anti-Semitism in this country emanates from the black community." But Mr. Kristol fails to develop a convincing case for linking the liberal ethos to the rise of a black anti-Semitism so unexpectedly virulent that it has brought the Jewish community to "the verge of a nervous breakdown." ...

No community could be more hostile to the "liberal ethos" than Brooklyn's Crown Heights, where hasidic fundamentalism embraces each jot and tittle of Torah law. Yet it is here, not in the uptown precincts of Manhattan's liberal Jews, where ghetto blacks, for the first time in American history, raced through city streets shouting "Heil Hitler" and "Kill the Jews," while at the same time a hasidic scholar was randomly executed.

A stone's throw from Crown Heights, a quarter-century earlier, before Farrakhan's rallies packed Madison Square Garden and be-



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fore the liberal party line of political correctness penetrated college campuses, black voices supporting the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school-decentralization controversy alleged that a Jewish-dominated school bureaucracy conspired to destroy "the mind and soul of our black children." . . .

How do these two events, a quarter-century apart, . . . connect to charges that "liberal policies . . . helped to create a black underclass and a demoralized black community"? Black anti-Semitism, Mr. Kristol affirms with meager evidence, "is a reaction to that liberal failure, and Jews, being so highly identified with liberalism, happen to make the most convenient target." Yet if all Jews were to turn neoconservative, and join in a vaguely defined religious renewal, would Farrakhan's fascist-like minions simply fade away? . . .

While Nation of Islam rallies generally include anti-white diatribes, laser-beam hatred is focused on "bloodsucking Jews," a phrase evoking the blood-libel myth. Apparently, Farrakhan's ministers . . . are well aware of the historic multidimensional faces of anti-Semitism, which frequently culminated in the confiscation of the Jewish community's assets. During the Middle Ages, Christian sovereign hosts fattened depleted state treasuries by levying confiscatory taxes. In our own time, Germany offered to trade Hungary's captive Jews for 10,000 trucks.

The failure of welfare-state liberalism does not even remotely connect to the emergence of black anti-Semitism, which is fueled by envy of and resentment at Jewish achievement and relative affluence. . . . The ultimate game plan is to isolate Jews in a trade-off which historically translates, one way or another, into the spoliation of Jewish wealth in return for domestic peace. Rootless, gun-toting ghetto gangs, concentrated in major urban centers, are ripe for the style of leadership offered by the Nation of Islam.

LEO BLOND

Bayside, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As always, Irving Kristol is right on the mark. . . . His thesis is that the non-Orthodox American Jewish community has wrapped itself in a sort of trinity consisting of "Judaism, secularism, and liberalism." At the political level, it has defined

the Jewish agenda as equivalent to the black agenda (or at least the version thereof voiced by the black establishment), despite the fact that the Jewish-black alliance never existed anywhere other than in the imagination of Jews. . . .

I think Mr. Kristol's analysis is too charitable. American Jews did not *link* Judaism to liberalism, they *replaced* Judaism with the American liberal political agenda. And political liberalism served as the principal avenue of assimilation for non-Orthodox Jews The substitution of liberalism for Judaism also explains the high rate of intermarriage: if Judaism is nothing more than liberalism, then intermarriage with a non-Jewish liberal is really not intermarriage at all. There is nothing of substance in Judaism that can act as any obstacle to such intermarriage.

Since American political liberalism has become the religion of the Jews, they continue to practice it even when the liberal agenda is injurious to their self-interest: for example, with regard to affirmative action and the hostility of many liberal candidates to Israel. . . .

Pursuing the pseudo-Judaism of religious liberalism will ultimately lead to the disappearance of the non-Orthodox American Jewish community. The Orthodox will muddle through, as will those few who may follow Mr. Kristol's clarion call to return to religion. . . . For most secular Jews, however, a return to Orthodoxy seems unlikely. The only remaining alternative, and it too will be adopted only by a small minority, and certainly not by the weak-willed, is Zionism.

STEVEN PLAUT

Haifa, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol asks if American Jews can learn to embrace the "crucial religious dimension" of their heritage and can begin to integrate it into their individual and corporate lives. My question is not can they or will they, but should they? . . . It is my belief that they should not.

They should not simply because it is intellectually untenable to do so. A year or so ago in his *New Republic* column, Michael Kinsley had occasion to quote George Orwell from a piece on T.S. Eliot:

In theory it is still possible to be an orthodox religious believer without

being intellectually crippled in the process; but it is far from easy, and in practice books by orthodox believers usually show the same cramped, blinkered outlook as books by orthodox Stalinists or others who are mentally unfree. The reason is that the Christian churches still demand assent to doctrines which no one seriously believes in. The most obvious case is the immortality of the soul.

We no longer believe in the immortality of the soul, or in the efficacy of prayer to a father God, or in some concept of the Jews as a superior people, or in the coming of a messiah ushering in a new cosmic order and accompanied by a resurrection of the dead. Twentieth-century men of intelligence—as diverse in their intellectual styles as Orwell, Camus, Edmund Wilson, H.L. Mencken, and Allan Bloom (to name but a handful)—have agreed with Freud that such doctrines (attractive and popular for any number of reasons as they may be) are "illusions," products of the intellectual infancy of the race. We *can* go on living under the spell of such illusions, but should we?

Isn't it precisely the role of the intellectual to dispel illusions (however comforting); to shatter myths (however benign); to break the hypnotic hold of superstition, however painful and disquieting such a liberation may be in the short run? Isn't it exactly the place of the intellectual not to hide but to describe nakedly the true terms of the human condition, in the process—such at least is the hope—freeing man in his struggle to carve out a destiny?

Mr. Kristol, I am sure, will insist that God is no myth; on the contrary. However, at the risk of seeming impertinent I am prompted to ask the following question: does Mr. Kristol truly believe in the existence of God, or, rather, isn't it a case of his finding the presumed consequences of nonbelief too terrible to contemplate? . . .

GLENN DIAMOND

San Luis Obispo, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol provides a fine diagnosis of the American Jewish condition and is bluntly on target in his analysis of the history of the black-Jewish relationship. . . . But he assumes, mistakenly I believe, that Jewish secularism marks the abandonment of any sense

of Jewishness or of Jewish affiliation. . . . Some of us know from experience that secular, humanistic Judaism is a viable option, a *tertium quid* between old-fashioned religion and loss of Jewishness. It can be an organized devotion to Jewish tradition and experience, albeit with some modifications of that experience and with some selection from that tradition.

Humanistic Judaism makes it possible for Jews not only to retain or regain a Jewish identity but even, when they intermarry, to reinforce that identity by bringing their spouses into a newly defined fold. This is neither to recommend intermarriage nor to disapprove of it . . . , but to remind us that intermarriage does not automatically obliterate Jewishness.

Secular, humanistic Jews are still few in organized numbers. Nonetheless they—we—represent a viable potential for Jewish continuity in the face of the loss, unavoidable for most emancipated intellectuals, of any old-time, or crudely theistic, religion.

Mr. Kristol says that the triple loyalty of Jews to secularism, humanism, and liberalism no longer seems as unproblematic as it once did. Perhaps it was always problematic and always threatened some loss of Jewish identity. But secular, humanistic Judaism is no longer necessarily conjoined to liberalism. This Judaism is open to varying political attitudes, including conservative ones, and it defines a new and potentially large Jewish identity, or movement.

Mr. Kristol says that our secular society is unraveling. Perhaps so, but as much because of reawakened warring orthodoxies as because of secularism. Mr. Kristol sees liberal Jews as opposed to prayer in schools. Perhaps that should be the wise and *conservative* stance of all Jews, as well as other religionists!

As for leftist Jews who are allied with black militancy, radical feminism, and anti-Israel politics—who float about freely and irresponsibly in academia—one could well say about them what Mr. Kristol says about the radical Left in general: “. . . about Jews and anti-Semitism they could not care less.” They are indeed lost at the moment to any viable Jewish identity. But their children might provide some surprises: expect them to move first to the Lubavitchers, before . . . still another generation,

the grandchildren, moves back to a sensible secularism. . . .

MORRIS GROSSMAN
Congregation for Humanistic
Judaism
Fairfield, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol's analysis . . . is at once incisive and illuminating. . . . He urges Jews to return by way of religion to “being Jewish.” But why should they do so? . . . Mr. Kristol fails to point the way. He dismisses as “hollow,” the “Jewish message” of universal justice. Yet it is this very message that is the quintessence of “being Jewish,” for it unites all Jews, whether ultra-Orthodox or secular. . . .

As a secular Jew, I have long given up seeking an answer to the question of whether the Master of the Universe was in being at the beginning of time or brought into being by Abraham. In either case, it was God who entered into a covenant with His people, binding them to obey His commandments. These commandments are the bedrock of “universal justice” and of “being Jewish.” . . .

God is a party to this covenant which binds Abraham's progeny, for God's obligation is to “watch

over” them. A Jewish male is circumcised as “a sign of the covenant between Me and you” (Genesis 17:9-11), thereby in effect notarizing a compact which calls upon Jews to be “a light unto the nations.” This mission is the crux of “being Jewish,” not ritual or worship. A Jew who sings the praises of the Lord and keeps kosher but violates the covenant may be religious, but he is not being Jewish. . . .

The main thrust of the Christian assault is that God tore up the covenant and entered into a “new” one with Christendom. My impression is that the original is still in force; otherwise, how does one account for Israel? As to the existence of a second covenant, or an addendum to the first, I am not competent to judge.

By all rights, as the historian Arnold Toynbee fumed, Jews should long ago have become a fossil race. But at the core of the Jewish mystique which has kept Jewry alive in a hostile world is the commitment “to keep the way of the Lord in doing what is just and right.” It is this divine mission that underlies “being Jewish” and has put Jews in the forefront of the struggle for universal justice.

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What proof can I offer that God singled out Abraham and his progeny to keep His way? I cannot even prove by direct evidence that God exists, let alone that He made this choice. The survival of the Jewish people over a 2,000-year period in the face of overwhelming forces to convert them and, if they would not convert, to demolish them, is to some an inexplicable mystery. To me it is a concrete reality, supplying the circumstantial evidence that backs up God's choice. . . .

Most American Jews, even those who are very rich, are in the liberal camp, for liberalism appears to be compatible with the historic Jewish mission to do what is just and right. Yet I share Mr. Kristol's view that liberalism is often misdirected, for it fails to factor in the limitations of human nature.

However, liberalism is not behind the decline of Jewishness in America. Nor is it the absence of persecution, for historically Jews often thrive when they are not oppressed, as in the medieval period in the Muslim world.

My prescription for reversing the alarming decline of American Jewry is not to tell Jews to abandon liberal causes, or to become more religious, but simply to stay Jewish. I would remind each wavering American Jew that he is linked by ties that can never be severed to our progenitor, Abraham, and that he is chained by the covenant to see to it that his children and grandchildren remain in the fold. . . .

A free-thinking Jew is as Jewish as a Hasid. In Israel we find many more secular than Orthodox Jews; all are Jewish and all are bound by the covenant to remain Jewish. No Jew is compelled to believe in God or to respect God's covenant with His people. Should a Jew challenge the validity of this covenant on the grounds that there is no God, he might well win his case. . . . But, like Faust, he will prevail at the expense of his inner spirit, or whatever else it is that makes each human a unique being. A Jew who ceases to be Jewish is doomed to lose his true identity.

Finally, to reply to the question of what's in it for a Jew to stay Jewish, my answer is that one born a Jew is endowed with a birthright that permits no other choice and exacts a heavy spiritual penalty should it be renounced. . . .

I do not, therefore, like Mr.

Kristol, urge American Jews to become more religious, but only to consider who they really are.

MICHAEL EBERT

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In a succession of articles over the last decade, Irving Kristol has written about the drift toward liberalism—religious and political—within the Jewish community, about where liberalism is leading the community, and about what might be done to change course. In these articles, Mr. Kristol has come close to putting his finger on the real problem. Exploring those areas where he falls short, though, may provide a window into attitudes and assumptions which are common to his generation, and which may give us an idea about what needs to be changed.

In a 1991 article in COMMENTARY ["The Future of American Jewry," August 1991], Mr. Kristol saw the secular-humanist instinct within the American Jewish community as of a piece with its socialist impulse. He did not appear too worried, though, because just as socialism as a political solution was withering away, so secular humanism, in his view, would eventually succumb to history as well, and cease to be a force in American religion at all.

His thesis was, and is, persuasive, intellectually satisfying, even encouraging—but for Christians. Because Jews do not proselytize outside the faith, they must rely upon reproduction to replenish their community. But given American Jewish birthrates, which are well below replacement level, that is not a very rosy prospect: by the time secular humanism wanes among American Jews, there may not be enough non-Orthodox Jews left for it to matter. Time is not on the side of American Jewry, as it may once have been.

Now, in his latest article, Mr. Kristol argues that decades of liberal politics have left the major Jewish organizations "trapped in anachronistic modes of thinking." Their long involvement in liberal social causes, he says, has prepared them to fight only the traditional foe of anti-Semitism (which, according to Mr. Kristol, they correctly recognize in resurgent black nationalism and erroneously see in Christian evangelism). But in his view the organizations in their lib-

eral concerns are unable to recognize or address the new enemy of the Jewish people: intermarriage.

This is true as far as it goes, and that such a thinker as Irving Kristol can come out and say so signals a new trend among Jewish intellectuals. But blaming a liberal agenda and Jewish organizations for the crisis of intermarriage only cuts so deep. And the argument is especially strange coming from a conservative like Mr. Kristol. He would no doubt agree that individuals are responsible for their actions: the welfare mother who continues to have more children, for instance, or the criminal who claims to be the victim of an unfair society. So why does he shrink from applying this line of reasoning to Jewish matters?

Mr. Kristol's prescription for transmitting Judaism (or, as he puts it minimally, reversing intermarriage) does not recognize the role of the individual. He does suggest that, just as Christians are increasingly turning to more fundamental forms of their religion to provide structure in an age of moral uncertainty and chaos, so American Jewry might also "reestablish a Jewish core, a religious core, as a key to its identity." But to achieve that identity he does not envision anything beyond new institutional initiatives, such as a focus among Jewish organizations on educational programs, led by the day schools, "running right through the college years," which might "have a marked effect."

That new focus would certainly be a step in the right direction, but, to borrow a term from politics, it would be big-government, welfare-state Judaism: handing over responsibility to the institutions. Although American Jewish organizations provide much-needed support for their fragile communities around the world, they do not create Jewish identity, and they must not be counted upon to do so in addition to their other pressing tasks.

The basic unit of Jewish communal life is not the synagogue or the day school, not the local Federation branch, B'nai B'rith lodge, or Hadassah chapter. It is the family. And the Jewish family has had more to do with the intermarriage crisis than the misguided liberal policies of any Jewish institutions: disregard for Judaism among Jewish families breeds disregard for Jewish families. . . .

After a century's efforts to redefine Judaism along institutional, intellectual, or secular lines, we should know enough to reevaluate the notion that Jewish values can be transmitted in any meaningful way except through religious observance, the building blocks of the Jewish self. Stripped of its particularities, Judaism simply does not have enough momentum to ensure that its values will be passed along to new generations—in other words, not enough to stem the tide of intermarriage. . . .

The remedy is not necessarily a return to the Orthodoxy of the *shtetl*, but it must begin with a return to Jewish particularity, and within a communal context. Just as Jewish values exist only within Jewish observances, so must those observances be sustained by a family and community, whether Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform. Here is where Jewish institutions can play a constructive role, in explaining how Jewish living might be compatible with 20th-century America.

Personal responsibility, though, deserves to be underscored here. Everything comes down to the level of the personal. If intermarriage is bad and the survival of American Jewry is good, then each individual must take steps to counter the trend toward intermarriage. On the other hand, if America's Jews do not see the death of American Jewry as a bad thing, we need only wait another generation or so, and the problem will have gone away.

Mark Miller

Washington Times
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The problem with Irving Kristol's prescription for Jewish survival—that American Jews abandon a faith in liberalism and reembrace their religious faith—is that Mr. Kristol presents such an action as simply making a rational public-policy choice. I do not think people calculate various options and then decide to choose faith as an alternative to other world views. Rather, faith is received after one or a series of inspirational life experiences. The difficulty is that many American Jews do not look for those experiences and do not recognize the ones they have as religious.

The policy proposal inherent in Mr. Kristol's article is that the or-

ganized Jewish community should . . . systematically introduce American Jews to those spiritually stirring experiences that can be created. The form of such experiences might be adult-education classes, lectures, beginner's services, and so on. Those forms, however, are far less important than the content of the experiences. If the aim is to make Jews more conscious of religion, then such experiences have to be explicitly spiritual and inspirational and have to teach people how to be more religiously sensitive.

Jewish spiritual experiences need to focus on helping people encounter the kind, loving, and personal God of Jewish tradition. This encounter, through prayer, or text, or song, or through some other means, is the heart of a spiritual life and leads to a fuller Jewish life.

LAWRENCE J. EPSTEIN
Stony Brook, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If Irving Kristol wants Jews to be more religious because he, too, is religious and would spread the faith, fine; if, like Benjamin Franklin, he simply feels that religion fosters virtuous behavior in even a moderately passionate flock, well,

not perfect, but good enough. But, as best I can make out, Mr. Kristol wants Jews to be more Jewish because Christians are becoming more Christian and because non-practicing Jews increasingly end up with Gentile grandchildren. With this argument from ethnic insecurity and domestic realpolitik, I am less impressed.

Mr. Kristol may believe that most Jews are too far gone to be susceptible to idealistic stirrings. Or perhaps he associates such blandishments with a leftist, countercultural, or even Christian agenda. But if appeals to straightforward religion or even practical morality are already obsolete or unavailing, it is surely too late: you cannot induce guilt in a generation of alleged cynics and narcissists with talk of demographic crisis, or proselytize with a gospel of political self-interest—and I think Mr. Kristol knows it.

What is needed is a genuine yearning for spirituality of some sort, and that Mr. Kristol seems oddly loath, maybe embarrassed, to invoke. Such modesty, however praiseworthy in a private context, is not necessarily advantageous in a would-be missionary.

SETH A. HALPERN
Scarsdale, New York

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol's article is excellent as far as it goes. There can be no doubt about the future of American Jews if present trends continue, but the only remedy Mr. Kristol suggests is Jewish education. And even on that he seems skeptical.

I propose that the remedy lies within the Jewish family. Inter-marriage will decline and observance will increase for future generations when we see a rise in the number of families who observe Jewish tradition and law. . . . It does no good to send children to Jewish schools, to synagogue, or to social events if the home does not reflect Jewish life. What is the message when parents drop off children at a synagogue on Saturday and then continue on their way to play tennis or go to work? . . . When the parents personally and actively participate in Jewish traditions, the children will follow suit now and in the future.

It is no wonder that the inter-marriage rate is so high today. Life with a Christian spouse is no different from the life experienced growing up. . . .

DAVID S. MAZEL
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was pleased to read Irving Kristol's reference to two studies concluding that "Jewish education correlates positively with involvement in Jewish causes, and does act as a brake on intermarriage." But . . . education by itself is, of course, not enough. The impressionable child must see dedication on the part of the parent, i.e., by regular attendance at the synagogue, as well as observance of Jewish customs in the home. . . .

ELLIOT SCHUBERT
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I applaud Irving Kristol for writing his article, long overdue as it is (it should have been written 30 years ago). The fact that at this late date serious people have to make the point that a community that calls itself Jewish ought to have some Jewish content and not simply be devoted to warmed-over liberalism, socialism, or other secular ideologies (most of them now dead) is a sad commentary on the dreadful state of affairs in Jewish life in America.

As Mr. Kristol points out, pro-

moting Jewish day-school education should represent the major focus for the established communal organizations for the next twenty years if they hope to have any relevance at all to the younger generation and to survive the passing of the older generation.

I wish Mr. Kristol had elaborated more on the failure of Jewish organizations in dealing with the issue of Jewish education. The inability to transmit Jewish values and culture (outside the Orthodox community) and the absence of a younger generation of secular Jews committed to the Jewish community in some way are a function, above all, of the near total lack of interest in Jewish education displayed by the Federations and other "leaders" of the non-Orthodox Jewish community. Even today, the people in positions of financial influence in these organizations are still obsessed with perpetual fund-raising campaigns for Israel, although Israel is now a prosperous, self-sufficient country that does not need their money. Anti-Semitism, the other main concern of Jewish organizations, is of such limited significance in the U.S. that they have to provoke fights with the Christian Right (which is mainly anti-secular, not anti-Jewish) to justify the huge investment they have made in fighting anti-Semitism.

I was also disappointed by Mr. Kristol's discussion of day-school education of the different streams in Jewish life—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. He repeats a tendency I have seen elsewhere among non-Orthodox Jews. . . . Rarely do these commentators, unfortunately including Mr. Kristol, comment on the one part of the Jewish population enjoying growth: . . . the Orthodox community—both the ultra-Orthodox and the modern Orthodox. Why is it that they, and he, dismiss contemporary Orthodox experience? . . . Is it that the revival of Orthodox Judaism—which so many of them had consigned to the dust heap of history not too long ago—is so unbelievable that they are dumbfounded by the whole phenomenon? Or is it embarrassment over its success and their failures? Or is it that the wall of separation between the Orthodox community and the rest of the Jewish population is so high that these commentators are simply unaware of what is going on?

The Orthodox day schools in America are the fastest-growing parochial-school system in the country, and the community they support has a lower rate of attrition of its young to the general society than probably any other religious group in the country—including the Mormons. Irving Kristol has written very sympathetically in the past about traditional Judaism and its values and principles. Why doesn't he comment on its successes and why it might or might not serve as a model for the rest of the Jewish population?

ELLEN S. SHNIDMAN
Rochester, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol's analysis of the central problem facing the American Jewish community is astute. Vast numbers of Jews have shed their Judaism, either trading it in for the secular religion of political liberalism, or simply abandoning it in pursuit of pure assimilation. He is correct, also, in noting that the various institutions which comprise the Jewish establishment have noticed what has been happening, are alarmed by it, and are instituting all manner of educational programs in response.

Unfortunately, Mr. Kristol pulls his punches when suggesting a solution. Education is a necessary first step in inculcating Jewishness, of course. But the ultimate success of any educational program, regardless of the sentiment propelling it, depends on how compelling the content is. The point of Jewish education is Jewish observance, and it seems to me unlikely that Reform programs which substitute liberal sentiment for Jewish law, literature, and prayer are likely to succeed. . . .

Perhaps Mr. Kristol suspects as much. On two occasions he takes care to point out that his observations do not apply to Orthodoxy. If, as Mr. Kristol implies, the Orthodox have managed to build a culture and an educational system that radically inhibit intermarriage and assimilation, let alone the various personal excesses that have created such an unhappy society, then shouldn't the rest of us study that model with an eye to borrowing from it, or more radically still, adopting it?

Of course, the Orthodox have had mixed success, too. All less observant Jews are descended from more observant ancestors. But in

recent decades various branches of Orthodoxy, especially in the U.S., have witnessed great growth, and have had significant success in attracting new adherents from among the secular. This is no small accomplishment, given the discipline and rigor that Orthodoxy, in any of its forms, requires.

Furthermore, it seems to me that in a culture which offers smart young Jews the pick of any world view they might choose, Judaism is that much more intellectually competitive in its more rigorous, less diluted, forms. Nor, given their disciplined lives, is it an accident that Orthodox Jews are far more sympathetic to the views which comprise political and cultural conservatism in our time than are secular Jews. . . .

The Orthodox may not have all the answers to the questions the community must grapple with. But we should listen to those they do have.

LISA SCHIFFREN
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In thinking about Irving Kristol's "Why Religion Is Good for the Jews," it occurred to me that one of Judaism's principal problems in retaining its own adherents is that it does not seek converts. To ask someone born into another faith to convert to one's own, one must first understand it clearly. It is not good enough to tell a potential convert that God has Himself designated a particular religion as the true one, because most, if not all, religions make the same claim.

Since Jews traditionally have not sought to gain converts, we have had no need for this clarity of understanding, and the resulting fuzziness about the value of our religion, at least among the non-Orthodox, has made us easy targets for groups that proselytize actively. Perhaps the time has come to reevaluate the traditional Jewish position on converts and thereby identify what it is about Judaism that might attract non-Jews. If we can figure that out, we should also know what will hold Jews.

YALE M. ZUSSMAN
North Quincy, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Permit me to applaud Irving Kristol's article. The only flaw I find is in the title, which may have turned off some of your readers. I suggest that a title that more nearly

You deserve a factual look at...

Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") Can Israel survive without it?

With the "peace agreement" between Israel and the PLO, the Middle East and Israel have entered a new phase. It will inevitably lead to the creation of a Palestinian state. Can Israel survive this dismemberment? Is it in the best interest of the United States?

What are the facts?

The Root of the Conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. It is about Israel's very existence. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan"; it calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of Territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over \$50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—

enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab states possess large arsenals of chemical and biological

weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is

an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile

"Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the 'West Bank'."

Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen

Palestinian Arab terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time", neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank".

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fits my reading of Mr. Kristol's thesis is "How Smart Jews Can Make Damn Fools of Themselves."

DAVID H. FAX
Canton, Massachusetts

IRVING KRISTOL writes:

I am grateful to those who have written approvingly of my article, and also to those who wrote critically. One of the virtues of writing for COMMENTARY is that its readers are not passive consumers of ideas but are prepared to wrestle with them, and with their authors too.

I cannot take up all the points touched on in these letters and shall focus mainly on what seems to me to be a major one: the relation of Jewish liberalism to black anti-Semitism.

Edgar M. Bronfman is quite right in singling out "frustration" among black university students and teachers as they confront the black condition in America. This condition is awful for at least one-third of the black community and has worsened dramatically in the past 30 years. The "politically-correct" interpretation of the spectacular upsurge in crime, illegitimacy, drug addiction, etc. in our

inner cities is that "white racism" is to blame. No one can really believe that, since you don't have to be a social scientist—a moderately long memory will do—to know that such racism has been in steady decline over the past decade. So what did happen?

By now there is a consensus, both scholarly and political, that the congeries of generous federal and state welfare programs since the early 1960's has helped create a dependent and demoralized population in the inner cities. This is why "welfare reform" is high on everyone's legislative agenda—including President Clinton's. But this puts educated blacks in a difficult position. They feel a natural (and commendable) solidarity with their suffering brethren and do not want to seem to be "blaming the victims"—their own kith and kin being, often enough, among these victims. At the same time, the more radical among the black university population, now in a post-civil-rights era, do have a near-paranoid sense that white "compassion," resulting in an overblown welfare state that corrupts the spirit of poor blacks, is *deliber-*

ately at fault. A scapegoat would be very useful to this vision.

But why the Jews? Why should general denunciations of "white racism" end up focusing on the Jews? Why not the Christian conservatives who kept aloof from the struggle for black civil rights and are not famous for pro-black sympathies? The Christian conservatives, however, have not been ardent and eloquent supporters of the welfare state. By attacking the Jews, the most liberal segment of the white population, and historically a convenient scapegoat in any case, these radical (or, as they are now called, "militant") blacks avoid seeming to "blame the victims" while at the same time avoiding a direct criticism of the welfare state that might lead to a shrinking of welfare programs—programs that do allow dependent black families to survive, if barely and badly.

Jewish idealism, in its liberal version, is now reaping the bitter fruit of its spiritual arrogance and ideological folly. Active and visible participation by Jews in the civil-rights movement is a proper source of pride for American Jews. The continuation of this visible and active role by Jews into the post-civil-rights era, working with the established black institutions like the NAACP and the Urban League—now themselves under severe attack by black "nationalists" (racists, actually)—to shape the black future in America, has been a disaster. In this future, an ever-expanding, ever-more "compassionate" welfare state was a *sine qua non*. To the degree that this welfare state has encouraged the economic, social, and moral collapse of the inner-city black populations, Jews *do* bear a special responsibility. The sooner the fantasy of some sort of Jewish-black "coalition" or "alliance" is removed from the horizon of the Jewish community, the better off we shall be.

Leo Blond points to the trouble in Brooklyn's Crown Heights where hasidic Jews, relatively poor and politically conservative, have been under attack by black anti-Semites. In fact, the welfare state is at issue there, too, since much of the friction involves the "fair" distribution of welfare-state "goodies," especially housing. But isolated instances of old-fashioned populist anti-Semitism among blacks (or Christians) are not a serious problem today. It is when the educated elite begins to show signs



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of anti-Semitic paranoia that one gets alarmed.

Glenn Diamond and Morris Grossman do not see how anyone can take seriously the idea that the Jewish religion is crucial to Jewish survival or to a satisfactory Jewish identity. But the secular humanism they recommend, transcending as it does all religions, gives Jews no reason to exist as Jews at all—except, perhaps, as a fossilized tribal remnant. Fossilization does not appeal to me.

Some dear friends of mine are both Jewish and atheist. Their children and grandchildren will almost surely end up being neither. But this, I fear, is not the place for the kind of serious discussion of religion and theology that is needed. That belongs elsewhere in the pages of COMMENTARY.

To those correspondents who emphasize the importance of the Jewish family, I can only express my agreement. If you want Jewish children, a Jewish family in a Jewish household is a necessary condition. But it is not, these days especially, a sufficient condition. The family is not omnipotent, and always needs the sanction and assistance of institutions, secular as well as Jewish.

The Jewish Future

II. Israel & the Diaspora

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert S. Wistrich ["Do the Jews Have a Future?," July] is concerned about the disappearance of the Jewish people, but he ignores the mathematics apparent in his own article.

If he is right and the Hasidim number 350,000 in Israel, with a similar number in the Diaspora, we have a total of 700,000. If we assume that one-quarter of this population is of childbearing age, we would have 175,000 families in formation. And if each set of parents has 8 children in each generation of 25 years, we would have 700,000 children, who would then produce 2,800,000 children in the following generation, and 11,200,000 in the ensuing 25 years. This totals almost 15 million Hasidim—an incredible number.

Although, currently, the few who leave the hasidic community have been offset by new "conversions" (*baalei t'shuva*), it could be that with a huge increase in numbers, there will be increased losses.

No doubt the economics of employment and finance will lower the compounding number. Nevertheless, the math is overwhelming and leads me to believe that the extinction in question may be that of the assimilationist mainstream, as the character of the Jewish people changes completely during the 21st century.

STANLEY M. BOGEN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

... Robert S. Wistrich outlines reasons for celebration. ... Jews enjoy religious, intellectual, and political freedom to an unprecedented extent. The Orthodox not only survived the Holocaust but are growing faster than mainstream Jewry. Israel provides a safe haven against persecution and serves as an object of national pride. Overall, Jews are an affluent, active, cultured people who, as much as any ethnic group, enjoy what the modern world has to offer.

Despite the felicity of the current situation, Mr. Wistrich ... writes that "never has it [the post-war Diaspora] seemed, in the longer term, more like an endangered species." ... He is troubled

by two phenomena. First, he depairs over the decline in the population of world Jewry with respect to the population of the world as a whole, a demographic trend arising from assimilation and intermarriage. (He recognizes that other religions and cultures in the West face similar circumstances.) The second phenomenon, related to the first, is that among those who retain a Jewish identity, there is a shallower knowledge of Jewish history and culture and a "diminishment" of "Jewish distinctiveness." Specifics are left to the reader's imagination.

That the rate of Jewish population growth is slower than it was prior to World War II appears to be true. The Jewish population in certain countries, according to statistics cited by Mr. Wistrich, is actually shrinking. Accepting these statistics *arguendo*, the question must then be asked: so what? ...

If Jewish population, overall, were declining so much that an actual vanishing were foreseeable, an argument could be made that we need more Jews. If bodies were needed to defend our national territory—and perhaps this is the case, although Mr. Wistrich does

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not make the argument—then there would be a moral premium on numbers. But we face neither crisis. Mr. Wistrich and others, myself included, simply take it for granted that more is better. . . . We do not want to assimilate, dissipate, dilute, blur, fade, wither, atrophy, or fizzle. But we should not lose perspective. It is preferable for the decline in Jewish population to occur as a result of intermarriage rather than pogroms.

Finally, I submit that there is no crisis of numbers. There is no crisis of intermarriage or assimilation in Israel, where nearly five million Jews reside. And, as Mr. Wistrich notes, the Orthodox continue to grow. . . . With respect to the remainder of Diaspora Jewry, the future is not clear. Intermarriage and divorce rates may continue to climb, or they may have already peaked.

The second of Mr. Wistrich's fears—that today's Jews have lost touch with tradition and have lost their distinctiveness—is the more interesting notion. Here Mr. Wistrich reveals his arrogance: he believes that *now*, in this day, as opposed to any time in the 4,000-year history of the Jewish people, we are losing the essence of our identity. And he is not alone. Most secular

Jews who identify as Jews nurture such a misapprehension. We regard our Orthodox forebears with a mixture of nostalgia and contempt. . . . Perhaps we respect their talmudic erudition and their endurance of persecution. But we reject their theological orthodoxy. We have no patience with beliefs that contradict geological and evolutionary science and demand that we follow 613 rules for everyday living. . . .

On the other hand, we look ahead . . . and we fear . . . (reasonably) that the coming generations will not appreciate what we hold dear. Moreover, we believe (wrongly) that they will reject their identity, that they will not be able to continue the tradition even if they desire to do so—that they will not be Jews. . . .

We want everything to stay the same. But it won't. Mr. Wistrich is right about that much. Jewish tradition and Jewish values will change. . . . But fear not. We hinterland Jews will not vanish into the mists.

PETER ELLENSON

Ann Arbor, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert S. Wistrich makes a compelling argument, in familiar Zi-

onist terms, for Israeli triumphalism and the withering away of the Diaspora. If, as Mr. Wistrich suggests, Hebrew literacy assures Jewish viability in Israel, while intermarriage portends its demise in the Diaspora, then his conclusion surely follows: Israel is destined to play "the key role in maintaining and transmitting Jewish ethnic and religious identity."

But if the "name of the malaise" of modern Jewish life is secularism, as Mr. Wistrich asserts, then Hebrew literacy surely will be inadequate to preserve Jewish culture. Among secular Israelis, Volvos and VCR's, Madonna and Michael Jackson, shopping malls and McDavids, have already become the index of Jewish gratification. Topless Tel Avivians flock to the beach on Yom Kippur. A Minister of Education teaches Israeli youth to forget the Holocaust. Israeli intellectuals incessantly berate their country for its "sinful" birth, which aborted Palestinian nationalism, and for its deranged "syndromes" of imperial conquest and domination. When I last prayed with secular Israelis in our *shul*, they seemed barely able—despite their Hebrew fluency—to distinguish the prayerbook from the Pentateuch. Pro-choice Judaism, the Judaism of secular Jews worldwide, flourishes quite as destructively in the Jewish state as in the Diaspora.

The current government of Israel, so inordinately attentive to secular-liberal fashion, is itself sufficient to refute Mr. Wistrich's optimistic claims for Zionism. Never have the leaders of the Jewish state been so bereft of precisely those "Jewish values" that Mr. Wistrich believes inhere in Zionism. Yitzhak Rabin, the first native-born Israeli Prime Minister, is hell-bent on removing Jews from "the land of [our] ancestors" and transforming it into a Palestinian state. Shimon Peres, his collaborator in divesting Israel of its biblical homeland, envisions a "new Middle East" with hardly a reference to Jews, Judaism, or a Jewish state to contaminate his universalistic mirage.

By now, the extraordinary synergy of Zionism and Judaism, dating from 1967, has all but vanished in Israel. It was not stifled by hostile Arabs but by Hebrew-speaking Zionists, who wander in a Jewish wilderness that stretches from Mt. Scopus to Harvard Square. Israel may outlast the Diaspora, although 2,500 years of Jewish history sug-



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gest otherwise, but the Jewish state now seems far likelier to fulfill Canaanite than Zionist dreams.

JEROLD S. AUERBACH
Wellesley College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

ROBERT S. WISTRICH writes:

It seems to me difficult to deny that, except for some islands of Orthodoxy, the Diaspora as a whole is declining, especially if we take as our measure the loss of Jewish identity and assimilation into the general environment. Numbers may not be everything, but they are important as an index of national vitality. Peter Ellenson claims that there is no crisis, but he offers no evidence for his assertion that intermarriage and divorce rates among Jews may have peaked. Nor can I see any rational basis for Stanley M. Bogen's speculation that there will be 15 million Hasidim in the 21st century.

Rather than gaze into a crystal ball, I sought instead to draw out some of the implications of current sociodemographic trends for the future of the Jewish people in the Diaspora. These are not encouraging, even in the most vibrant of all the Diasporas, namely, the American Jewish community, with its unique advantages of prosperity, power, freedom, and acceptance into mainstream society. Indeed, it is precisely these favorable circumstances that make the forces of assimilation so strong and have partly contributed to the erosion of the numbers of identifiable and self-identifying Jews.

It is against this background that the case for Zionism and the Jewish viability of Israel appears more striking. It is hardly "Israeli triumphalism" to point out that in the last 50 years, the Jewish population of Israel has leaped from less than 3 percent of world Jewry to almost 33 percent. If current demographic trends continue in both Israel and the Diaspora, then a majority of the Jewish people will be living in the Jewish state well before the middle of the 21st century.

Certainly, one can raise serious questions about the quality of Jewish life in Israel, as Jerold S. Auerbach is entitled to do. Indeed, some of the symptoms of rampant secularism and materialism which he alludes to—as well as the lack of empathy with "Jewish values" emanating from certain government quarters—are extremely re-

grettable. But to see the present reality of the Jewish state as moving in a "Canaanite" rather than a Zionist direction, is, I think, seriously to overstate the case.

Israel has scarcely solved *all* the "Jewish questions," but no unbiased observer can deny its demographic, social, and cultural vitality. Religion, too, has hardly disappeared from the landscape of the Jewish state, despite the militant secularism of a significant sector of Israeli life. The flaws and deficiencies in Israel's political culture are another issue altogether, which lay beyond the scope of my article. One of the sources of these problems has undoubtedly been the failure to educate Israeli society in a shared national ethos that incorporates the best Jewish values. It is surely a common challenge for both Israeli and Diaspora Jews to find new and creative ways to reassert the validity and vitality of Jewish civilization in its religious *and* secular dimensions.

Dictators & Art

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Grenier ["The Fuehrer's Filmmaker," *Movies*, August] raises a very interesting question: can artists loyal to cannibalistic regimes like Nazi Germany or Communist Russia produce great work? His primary example is Leni Riefenstahl, but Mr. Grenier also refers to the movies of Russian film directors loyal to the Soviet regime like Aleksandr Dovzhenko and Sergei Eisenstein. If anything, these examples suggest that Leni Riefenstahl is, at best, something of an aberration. It is impossible for a truly honest and talented artist to thrive while working in the service of an inhuman regime.

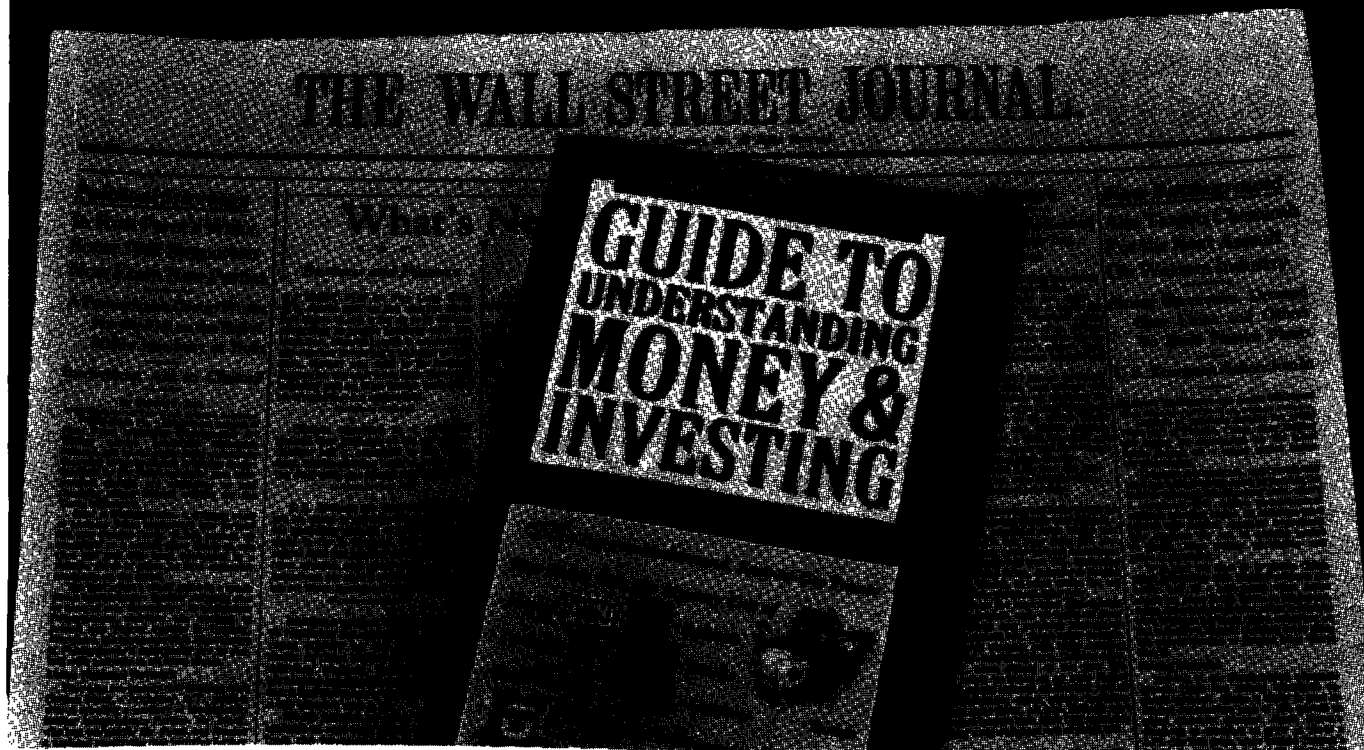
After his first successful film, Dovzhenko never amounted to anything; his life was an exercise in futility. Eisenstein was the most talented film director of those years. He produced his first truly great film, *The Battleship Potemkin*, in 1925, not long before Stalin succeeded in driving all independent creativity in art deep underground. Devoted to exposing the cruelty of czarism in the 1905 revolution, the film would have suited the needs of any anti-czarist movement, democratic or totalitarian. Eisenstein's other truly great work is *Ivan the Terrible*, which Stalin ordered him to produce.

As the story behind the production of this film illustrates, there is a fascinating relationship between Ivan and Stalin, the two greatest villains of Russia's past. Stalin was a great admirer and an obsessive student of his 17th-century predecessor; he attempted in all his doings to repeat Ivan the Terrible's acts. According to Nikolai Cherkassov, the brilliant Russian actor who played the role of Ivan in Eisenstein's film, the Soviet dictator once complained to him that Eisenstein depicted the czar killing innocent people. Stalin then began to count (on his fingers!) the names of the boyars whom Ivan should have killed but did not. A convincing case can be made that some of Stalin's policies, notably his seizure of the Baltic states and his deportation of the Crimean Tatars, were motivated by an attempt to make up for the failures of Ivan the Terrible, such as his loss of the twenty-year war with Lithuania, and the occupation and burning of Moscow by the Tatars. Stalin's terror was nothing more than a replication, on a far grander scale, of the czar's terror, with the NKVD playing the role of the *oprichniki*. So strong and uncanny is the resemblance between the two tyrants that those who would make the case for reincarnation should cite it as Exhibit A.

Although Eisenstein received an order from Stalin to portray Ivan the Terrible as a popular hero, after Stalin saw the second part of the film, which is full of compassion for the victims of Ivan's terror, Eisenstein was banished from the Soviet film industry till his death in 1948. All of Eisenstein's preparatory work for the third portion of the film was ordered destroyed, and the second part appeared in movie houses only many years after Stalin's death. Eisenstein's fate, it seems to me, sums up the inevitable relationship between any truly gifted artist and such a regime.

One stunning pattern is the passion that the 20th century's great dictators have had for film. Hitler, according to Leni Riefenstahl, dreamed of making movies. Stalin, too, spent sleepless nights watching the silver screen; the filmmaking industry was practically the only branch of Soviet life that did not suffer from his purges; and Eisenstein himself was never imprisoned or killed for his crime of insulting Stalin's idol. Today, tragi-

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comically, North Korea's official Dear Leader, Kim Jong Il, is known to have gone to the extent of kidnapping South Korean filmmakers to help satisfy what appears to be an insatiable thirst for the cinematic arts.

Why do totalitarian dictators enjoy movies so much? Perhaps Richard Grenier can explain.

BORIS GULKO
Fairlawn, New Jersey

RICHARD GRENIER writes:

I thank Boris Gulko for his intelligent and thoughtful letter. My explanation of why totalitarian dictators are drawn to motion pictures—beyond Lenin's dictum that they are the most powerful means of propaganda known to history—is that dictators, in a sense, are utopians. They dream of a perfect world. Not a free and democratic world, of course. They dream of racist utopias, or classless utopias, worlds in which everything will fit into its assigned place exactly as they wish (as did Plato in *The Republic*). The trouble with the real world, from the dictators' point of view, is that it has so many irregularities that it can never be made to fit the ideal universe of their dreams, which has led some dictators in the 20th century to become loathsome prodigies of coercion. It also tends to lead them, as a refuge, to the movies as an imaginary world where everything can be made to fit precisely as they wish. As Mr. Gulko might know, not only Kim Jong Il but Fidel Castro is a movie fan. In his early years, when he could afford it, he subsidized a considerable Cuban movie industry in which life, and the Cuban past, were portrayed as they existed in his imagination.

In asking if an artist "working in the service of an inhuman regime" can produce great work, Mr. Gulko asks a far more difficult question, one debated for centuries. A quite widespread belief in pre-Columbian America, from the Aztecs of Mexico to the Moche of Peru, was that the sun, enjoined to circle the earth endlessly, must be getting tired, and that an offering of human blood would somehow give it strength. So formidable and fascinating works of art (for example, the gold figures from the recently discovered tomb of Sipan now on special display at the American Museum of Natural History in New York) depict ritual bloodletting of captives being literally bled to

death. Obviously this is a practice repulsive to the modern age, but it apparently was not repulsive to the (pre-Inca) Moche of Peru. So, although reasonable men may differ, my feeling—regardless of our attitudes today—is that great art can be produced if the artist is in harmony with the ethical beliefs of his age.

In European civilization, as we approach the modern period, the question becomes more divisive. If a person is critical of the rule and practices of the Roman Catholic Church of the late Middle Ages, for example, or even opposes capital punishment, he could well consider the Church of this historical period to have been inhuman. But François Villon, perhaps the greatest poet of medieval times, clearly did not. Although educated, with a degree from the Sorbonne, Villon led a thoroughly disreputable life, engaged in murderous brawls, killed a priest, was arrested many times, and was sentenced to be hanged. But his greatest *ballades* (printed for the first time a quarter-century after he disappeared from the pages of history), like *Ballade Pour Prier Notre Dame* and *Ballade des Pendus*, beg for divine mercy in strict accordance with the Catholic faith.

Modern totalitarian dictatorships, of the Nazi, Stalinist, and also Maoist varieties, produced a great deal of absolutely abominable art. But with the browbeating attitude toward the artist of all three of these regimes, one can only wonder whether they produced a single artist with the profound faith of François Villon. Interestingly, in Fidel Castro's very first years, his regime produced some excellent movies. But, I suspect, that was while Cubans still believed in their "maximum leader." Therein might lie our answer.

Matthew Arnold

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

John Gross [Matthew Arnold and Us," July] is right to object to Samuel Lipman's description of the author of *Culture and Anarchy* as "a lonely spokesman for an inward culture," but he forgets that Arnold's practical instrument for making "sweetness and light" prevail was not "arguments fairly loose and . . . terms fairly vague," but the state, "the nation in its collective and corporate character." "When anarchy is a danger to us," wrote

Arnold, "to this authority we may turn with sure trust. . . . We want an authority, and we find nothing but jealous classes, checks, and a deadlock; culture suggests the idea of the state." To discuss *Culture and Anarchy* at length, as Mr. Gross does, without ever mentioning the centrality of the state in Arnold's conception of culture is like discussing Rousseau's *Social Contract* without mentioning the idea of the general will (or analyzing *Hamlet* without mentioning the Prince of Denmark).

Mr. Gross claims that in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold "broadened the argument of 'The Function of Criticism.'" It would be truer to say that he significantly reversed it. In the earlier work he insists that the critic must "leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications"; in the later, he commits himself "to drive at practice as much as I can," and he does so by recommending the state as the center of light and authority that culture requires. If Arnold was indeed the liberal that Mr. Gross calls him, it was not because "he believed in progress" but because he believed in the authority of the state, a principle far dearer to the hearts of 20th-century liberals than to the Victorians (like John Stuart Mill) who went by that name.

EDWARD ALEXANDER
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Welfare Feminism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to applaud Midge Decter ["Welfare Feminism," July] for her recognition of the nihilism in Katha Pollitt's writing. Pollitt may equate welfare-dependency with "husband-dependency," but, as Miss Decter notes, "Pollitt herself has nothing, not one word, to say about welfare, though it is ostensibly a key object of her concern."

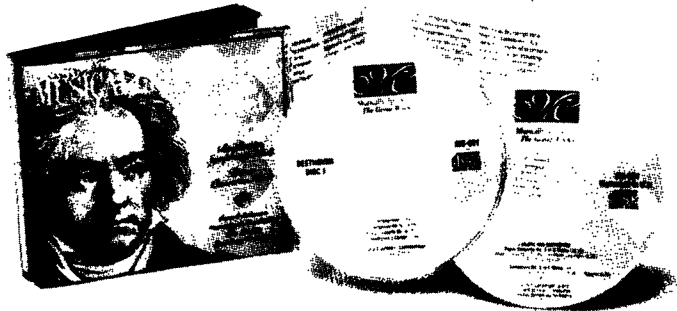
Pollitt links poverty with virtue. "I'm for Tonya," writes Pollitt in her March 7 column in the *Nation*, in which she attributes her sympathy for Tonya Harding, Lorena Bobbitt, and the Menendez brothers (!) to their low-class status.

Miss Decter does well to point out that in her column on welfare Pollitt says little about "the deaths of babies and young children from neglect and abuse. . . ." Indeed, Pollitt's fondness for the poor is broad enough to extend to a tolerance of

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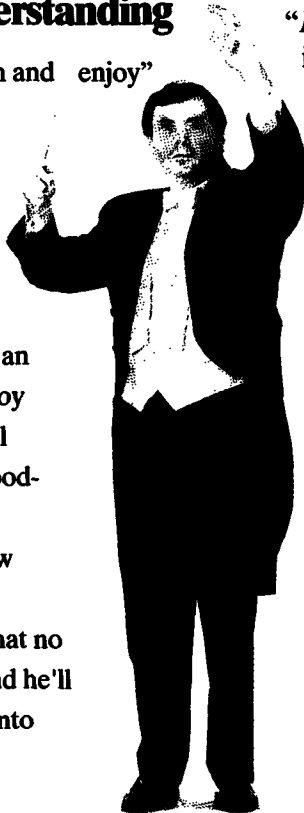


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lawlessness. After all, members of societies that are especially violent—especially to women—are likely to be poor. Is Pollitt, then, really pro-woman, or is she pro-crime?

GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ
College of Staten Island
Staten Island, New York

Political Leadership

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Only the most devoted party member, Democrat or Republican, is likely to challenge Paul Johnson's observations ["A World Without Leaders," July] on the mediocre quality of our political leadership. And that, precisely, is the direction one should look for the source of this problem, not Congress, as Mr. Johnson suggests in his concluding paragraph. . . . The fault, I believe, can be traced to . . . a party system that is becoming ever more insular.

What did this system offer the American people in 1992? President Bush and Candidate Not-Bush who, in major respects, resembles George Bush more and more as time goes by. And, as we have seen, President Bush . . . most resembled President Carter. . . .

Was it not an article of democratic instruction that, in the Soviet Union, the Communist party represented a very small minority of the population and acted more to preserve party privilege than to speak on behalf of, and work toward, the general welfare? Regard the parties that gave us Bush and Clinton. . . . After nearly six years of Bush and Not-Bush, is the struggling class better off than it was during the last days of the Reagan presidency?

One does not have to be an economist to glean from the confused stories on the front pages of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* that the rich liberals are getting richer and the struggling class is struggling all the more. Yes, the rich liberals; anyone who would charge the Clintons with being socialists is foolish. If only they were interested in the well-being of the struggling class. . . .

What is to be done? If the choice we are given by the major parties in 1996 is Clinton and Not-Clinton, and if we are dissatisfied with this choice, we should simply not vote. What if they gave an election and no one except party hacks and lobbyists participated? . . .

When it comes down to prob-

lems in democratic government, the fault, dear Mr. Johnson, is not with Congress; it is with ourselves.

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have been a subscriber to COMMENTARY almost since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. If a decision about subscribing to COMMENTARY were to rest upon Paul Johnson's "A World Without Leaders," I would without hesitation not subscribe. The article was the acme of poor judgment and reactionism. It is incredible to me how Mr. Johnson could include Ronald Reagan among our great Presidents—and, to compound his lack of discernment, to include Calvin Coolidge among the near-great. I did not believe what I was reading.

J. MITCHELL ROSENBERG
New York City

Pragmatism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Daniel J. Silver is to be commended for recognizing that Richard Rorty is a dubious heir to the philosophy of John Dewey, yet his review of *The Promise of Pragmatism* by John Patrick Diggins [Books in Review, July] contains significant misunderstandings of Dewey and pragmatism. Mr. Silver states: "Dewey's stress on the immediacy of experience led him to a militant rejection of history as a guide to action." It is not clear what "rejection of history" means, but I take it to refer to Dewey's steadfast advocacy of forward-looking procedures of inquiry and judgment. Although Dewey did have insufficient respect for history, he did not reject it militantly, nor was his neglect a consequence of an emphasis on the immediacy of experience.

Dewey's pragmatism was in large part a deliberate attempt to appropriate the power of experimental science for use in all areas of inquiry. Experimental science is not and cannot be exclusively forward-looking. It cannot ignore the knowledge stored within any field of inquiry, but it does not take this knowledge as final. When inquirers reach what Dewey called a problematic situation, they formulate a hypothesis concerning the potentialities of nature pertinent to their inquiry; but they do not start from scratch. If they did,

there would be no need to know the current state of their science. Likewise, in a socially problematic situation, those looking for guidance in conduct cannot ignore all precedents in experience. Indeed, in his *Liberalism and Social Action*, Dewey stated that the generic function of intelligence is to mediate between past and future.

Although in principle he could not reject history, Dewey tended to underestimate its significance for conduct. The reason for this lies in his assumptions that past social action had been guided largely by sheer prejudice and that human nature is extremely malleable. Hence he tended to minimize the merits of existing institutions. Another thinker might be more impressed by the enduring resistances to change within human nature and institutions than Dewey was; and he might well look to history for substantial evidence of these resistances. Dewey's philosophical anthropology was such that he did not take evidence of this sort to be compelling.

Dewey's analysis of experience is crucial to all phases of his philosophy. For Mr. Silver to speak of the immediacy of experience, however, is hazardous, because both "immediacy" and "experience" are slippery concepts. Dewey flatly denied that ordinary human experience is unmediated (if that is what Mr. Silver means by "immediacy"). It is, on the contrary, "saturated with meanings" (in Dewey's phrase), without which no inquiry could be conducted. There is nothing in Dewey's conception of experience that legitimates the alleged "rejection of history."

A more fundamental question concerns the nature of pragmatism itself. Mr. Silver, like Diggins, takes it to be inseparable from a form of communitarian liberalism. This is a serious mistake, and it is shared by many others (e.g., Cornel West in *The American Evasion of Philosophy*). Pragmatism presents, among other things, certain criteria for the conduct of inquiry. As such, it is politically neutral. Dewey always cautioned that we must be willing to accept the results of inquiry without discount. Accordingly, if the enactment of hypotheses of a given form of politics brings consequences other than anticipated—perhaps doing more harm than good—then any conscientious pragmatist must renounce these hypotheses.

When pragmatism is thought to be inseparable from a given conception of human nature or society, or from a particular set of social policies, then it betrays itself. It becomes a dogma; and dogmas are the bane of intelligence, as Dewey always insisted. There is no better example of pragmatic philosophy since Dewey than that of Sidney Hook. Hook's political orientation moved from far Left to something resembling neoconservatism. Yet he was throughout a pragmatist. These two facts are not adventitiously related, for it was Hook's sober reassessment of human possibilities that brought about the changes in his political allegiances. The willingness to undertake such crucial inquiries is indispensable to any serious pragmatist.

JAMES GOUINLOCK
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

DANIEL J. SILVER writes:

James Gouinlock seems to have misconstrued my review of *The Promise of Pragmatism*: I was not attempting to provide an assessment in the abstract of either pragmatism or of Dewey's thought, but to raise the question of what value, if any, pragmatism as a philosophical stance has for political action. I brought up this concern because a number of thinkers in recent years, representing a fairly wide range of political beliefs, have taken to calling themselves "pragmatists." They feel that pragmatism can be revived as a conceptual paradigm to help us overcome the malaise and theoretical roadblocks that, for them, characterize our current state of politics.

It is hardly surprising that John Patrick Diggins, a distinguished historian and not a philosopher, should be particularly interested in Dewey's views on historical knowledge. And Diggins's discussion of these views is the center-

piece of his very long section on Dewey. By stating that Dewey was led "to a militant rejection of history as a guide to action," I was merely paraphrasing Diggins's assessment, as illustrated, for instance, in this passage:

The idea that the purpose of history is to discover the great moral lessons of the past that we should know in order to obey could hardly be endorsed by Dewey, who saw historical reality as an indeterminate series of unique events from which no clear lessons could be drawn.

Mr. Gouinlock professes not to know what I meant by "rejection of history," but if he would just complete the phrase he would see that, of course, I was not saying that Dewey rejected history; he could no more do this than ignore the sun. The point is, rather, what practical value he ascribed to a knowledge of history. And, as Mr. Gouinlock acknowledges, Dewey insisted that we could not learn from the past how to act in the present.

As to "immediacy," no, I did not mean "unmediated," but was referring, rather, to Dewey's concern that we embrace the present moment without being bogged down in the pretense that we understand the causal conditions—or "foundations," to use current jargon—that determine our present position. I meant something consonant with Mr. Gouinlock's description—highlighted in my review, as it is in Diggins's book—of Dewey's experimentalism: that we should be willing just to do things and see what happens and then go on to reflect on the results of our actions. Mr. Gouinlock insists that Dewey's skepticism about drawing lessons from history has to do exclusively with his desire to avoid the prejudices inscribed in past dogma; but to try to separate this theme from the emphasis on the relative fresh-

ness of acting in the present is to distort the interconnectedness of Dewey's philosophy.

As to my alleged identification of pragmatism with "communitarian liberalism," Mr. Gouinlock is mistaken. It is Diggins who makes the connection, and for an obvious reason. As both Diggins and Robert B. Westbrook, Dewey's biographer, agree, even with their very different assessments of Dewey, a renewed sense of community is one of the central terms of Dewey's public philosophy. Again, the context of the discussion is the political value of pragmatist thought; communitarian liberals, at the very least, share with Dewey the feeling that redefining political culture around a like-minded community is a central political act. This is different, for instance, from a liberalism that stresses individual rights and takes its inspiration from Locke and Mill, or more recently John Rawls and Robert Nozick.

Mr. Gouinlock appears to believe that pragmatism is a philosophy that can be described by a platonic template that timelessly determines its essence. But pragmatism is whatever the various people who have invoked the term have said it is. Mr. Gouinlock may have his own purist idea of pragmatism, but he cannot easily rule the views of others out of court.

The example of Sidney Hook is, indeed, quite telling, but not in service of the lesson for which it is offered. Hook did move from leftism to a more conservative position. The expression "learning from experience" used to be serviceable enough to describe such changes of heart. The idea that this change is most easily explained by Hook's adherence to pragmatism as a philosophy of action seems like a pretentious gloss, at best, and only exposes how vacuous the uses of pragmatism for politics can be.



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What To Do About National Defense

Eliot A. Cohen

I. Old Ideas

GREAT struggles leave their marks on the institutions that wage them. The ambience of the cold war saturated every element of our defense establishment, including the intellectual establishment that grew up around it. Our ways of thinking, our assumptions about the world, our views of statecraft and of the American role in the world—all bore, and still bear, the imprint of the duel with Communism. American defense planners have found it far easier to scrap some of the hardware of the cold war than the software, the intellectual algorithms for thinking about defense.

When a staff officer prepares a briefing justifying a defense budget with carefully constructed scenarios of Iraq invading Saudi Arabia, he does so using a frame of reference shaped by the cold war, even if the Russians no longer figure as the enemy. When administration representatives discuss the need to “contain” regional opponents, they think in categories concocted by George Kennan and Paul Nitze at the dawn of the contest between East and West. When defense contractors offer studies to the Defense Department on “deterrence after the cold war,” they unwittingly perpetuate concepts of American strategy that have decreasing relevance to the real troubles of the new age. It will be many years before self-conscious examination of the intellectual legacy of the cold war, and the smack of reality contradicting it, breed new ways of thinking.

One of the least fortunate aspects of all this has been an oversimplification of our own strategic history. When American strategists in the late 80's and early 90's first set out to consider a new posture for the post-cold-war period, they were

haunted by the specter of a rapid and ruinously complete demobilization of U.S. forces. This, they said, was a peculiarly American temptation.

Thus, Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense during the Bush administration: “. . . historically we've always gotten it wrong. We've never done it right. You can't find a time in this century when we've been through one of these cycles where we did, in fact, take the force down in an intelligent fashion.” In making this assertion, Cheney was merely echoing the anxieties of other American military writers who have discerned repeated “cycles” in America's strategic posture from extreme underpreparedness, to a belated rush to arms in the face of emergency, and back again.

In fact, however, the essential American story is far more complex than this. From the time of colonial settlement, to the Founding, and throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, our strategic record was far better than is commonly supposed, and certainly superior to that of most of the European states with which we had to contend. Moreover, even in the 20th century the so-called “cycle” disintegrates on closer inspection. In the immediate aftermath of World War I, for instance, the United States returned to adequately-equipped regular services, with a considerably larger establishment than that of 1914, and a Navy on the edge of parity with that of Great Britain. America's serious interwar military troubles began only in the late 20's and early 30's, when the Great Depression struck.

IN MORE recent times, American military thinkers have found themselves transfixed not only by the theory of “cycles” but by four particular uses of force: three failures, and one success. The failures are Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia; the success was the Persian Gulf war. Many officers (and not a few civilians) read into these cumulative experiences the following half-truths or, in some cases, falsehoods: wars can be won easily if civilian authorities will set clear objectives and then get out of the way; the press is invariably hostile to the military, and should, where possible, be excluded or manipulated by it; the American people lack the stomach for casualties, and will only support war if it is conducted with the utmost speed.

Careful reflection reveals a far more compli-

ELIOT A. COHEN is professor of strategic studies at Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies and the author (with John Gooch) of *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, as well as numerous articles on national-security affairs. From 1991 to 1993 he directed a Defense Department study of the role of aviation in the war with Iraq; for the resulting five-volume *Gulf War Air Power Survey* he received the Air Force's highest civilian decoration.

With this essay we continue the series inaugurated in September with James Q. Wilson's article on crime, followed in October by Gertrude Himmelfarb and Chester E. Finn, Jr. on education.

cated set of truths. The military in Vietnam had much more discretion (particularly in the south) than is usually acknowledged. When the use of force is likely to have political repercussions (i.e., always), some measure of civilian control is entirely appropriate. The press is no more hostile to the military, at least initially, than it is to any other institution of government or private enterprise; it is, in any event, an inescapable feature of modern life. And the sensitivity over casualties shown in the Gulf war stemmed far more from military officers (for a variety of reasons) than from the public, whose sons and daughters had no fear of conscription to induce in their parents a moderating aversion to bloodshed.

The cold war put an even greater premium on apodictic statements than is the norm in politics. The first task in rethinking American strategy after the cold war, then, is to develop a healthy mistrust of the shibboleths and folk wisdom of the American national-security debate. To revise our strategy in accordance with our needs will require not merely an attempt to limn our future, but a careful and, insofar as is possible, dispassionate examination of our past. This requires no small effort; most American policy analysts and decision-makers have little interest in serious study of our history, and too few military historians think they have much to contribute to an understanding of our present and future.

II. The Strategic Environment

FOR many people today, the world is a dismal place; the atrocities of war in cities from Bihac to Aden, and from Sukumi to Kigali remind us of that. The trends in other parts of the world—where Japan anxiously eyes a Korean peninsula soon to be kitted out with nuclear weapons, or ethnic Russians think of secession from an economically moribund Ukraine—are not terribly encouraging. But from a purely *American* point of view, the world is, and for some length of time promises to be, a more secure place than it was during the cold war. For now, Americans have the luxury, as peoples very rarely do in their history, to rethink their fundamental national-security policy.

The new strategic environment has three dominant characteristics: international disorder; a revolution in military affairs; and a crisis of demotic culture. Let us consider each in turn.

That the cold war imposed an order on international politics and provided a strategic rationale for American behavior is a truism. It also imposed a global logic on American defense policy: the essential decisions, in such a world, were decisions *not* to engage the Soviet Union or its clients. Although American leaders distinguished between areas of greater and lesser importance to the United States, they often did so on the basis of cost and benefit, rather than intrinsic interest.

After the cold war, American interests have become altogether hazier; they have also in some measure contracted. To take only two cases: during the contest with the Soviet Union, Somalia and Yugoslavia had some importance as *points d'appui* for military power. The United States could not be indifferent to what happened in those countries, because of repercussions for the balance of power in their respective regions. Although the immediate *military* consequences of a shift of either of those countries from one camp to the other would have been small, the geopolitical and certainly the psychological effects would not.

Today, the situation is different. The United States has no immediate strategic interest in either country. Its prestige does not ride on the outcome of clan warfare in Mogadishu or Sarajevo, at least as long as Washington refrains from making foolish pronouncements about what it will do in either place. Our interest in the resolution of these civil conflicts is firstly humanitarian and only secondarily, and in the long term, strategic. (The long-term consequences of the Yugoslav civil war could prove exceptionally ugly in the Balkans more generally, but that should properly concern inhabitants of Berlin, Paris, and Rome far more than residents of Atlanta, St. Louis, and Los Angeles.)

The stumblings of the Clinton administration conceal a far deeper problem in the conduct of American foreign policy than the failures of a particularly inept group of politicians. The calls often heard at home and abroad for a foreign-policy "vision," along the lines of containment in the cold war, miss the point. It is highly unlikely that anyone can or will respond. The contrast between the situation now and that of 45 years ago reflects not only the superiority of the statesmen then (a fact, to be sure); it reflects the ambiguity of a world that faces challenges far more complex, if for the moment less ominous, than those of 1945-50.

The geopolitical challenge to American policy in those years was simple: the emergence of Soviet power and its expansion in Europe. The economics of that confrontation were also fairly straightforward: the American economy accounted for a staggering 50 percent of global production, and the European countries had most of the human resources necessary to rebuild their economies. Even so, it required several direct challenges, including Communist coups, for American statesmen to devise the responses—containment, the Marshall Plan, and the rearmament prompted by National Security Council Memorandum Number 68 and the Korean war—that the times demanded.

Today the geopolitical problems before us are far more diffuse, and the remedies far less obvious. There is, and can be, no global scheme for American foreign policy, save for the vague objective of promoting an open international trad-

ing and communications order. American statesmen have no dragons to slay, or even to tame; partners may be competitors, but no state poses a direct challenge to our security or that of our allies. Moreover, in this new world our economy, although thriving, commands barely a quarter of the world's gross product, a portion likely to shrink as growth continues to spread in Asia.

SO MUCH for the new element of international disorder. A second broad development is what defense thinkers call the "revolution in military affairs." We are in the early stages of a transformation of warfare which, like changes in the economy more generally, will be driven by the new technologies of information.

Until quite recently—say, the 1970's—military technology essentially resembled that of World War II, albeit vastly improved and upgraded. The advent of the microchip and various advanced materials (e.g., for the construction of stealth aircraft) now promises a far more radical change in the conduct of war.

Thus, armed forces in advanced states can deploy unparalleled capabilities to see and track opponents, and to deliver precise conventional fire. The Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites, for example, put accurate navigation within the grasp of human beings almost anywhere on the planet. Satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles, and remote acoustic, infrared, and other sensors have transformed the gathering of intelligence.

Above all, the networking of military organizations by electronic communications will radically alter their efficacy, even as it creates new opportunities for warfare by electronic means as varied as electromagnetic pulse weapons (which disable electronic devices by brute force) and computer worms or viruses (which do the same by stealth).

Conventional warfare in the 21st century may look very different from warfare today. It may be preceded by periods of covert warfare involving electronic sabotage. Fighting may consist of barrages of accurate long-range cruise and ballistic missiles, while mobile forces such as ships or tanks may find themselves caught in webs of "intelligent" minefields that can detect their presence in a half-dozen different ways. Rather than fighting as individual platforms, ships and planes will increasingly fight as networks, and what constitutes the high ground in such contests will be an advantage in information as much as in terrain. Attacks on command posts and on the other side's "eyes" will be accompanied by efforts to hide through the use of camouflage and deception.

The revolution in military affairs will have a number of effects. It will enable new competitors with the United States to amass certain kinds of military power relatively quickly. For example, until recently satellite pictures that could discriminate among objects one meter long were the stuff of supersecret national organizations. Today, they are on the verge of becoming rou-

tinely available commercial products from American and overseas space vendors. Again, in the Gulf war only the United States had, in any quantity, receivers that could allow precise geolocation using the GPS. Such receivers are already widely available commercially, and within a few years will fit comfortably in a shirt pocket.

Furthermore, the end of the cold war has meant that the vast pool of scientific talent and military technology in the former Soviet bloc has become available for export around the world. And as some countries, particularly in Asia, have become wealthier, they have acquired a taste for the latest in military hardware. In the 1960's, the Northrop Corporation could enrich itself by selling the reliable but relatively low-technology F-5 fighter to America's allies. Today, countries like Malaysia will buy only the latest in American military technology.

These developments do not necessarily undermine the American military edge. The American defense budget still towers over all others. At some \$244 billion a year, it is roughly seven times that of any major European country and about six times that of Japan. Minor troublemakers like Iran and Iraq do not spend 5 percent of what the United States spends on military power. In addition, during the cold war the United States amassed a vast capital stock which retains enormous value. Our constellation of intelligence-gathering systems in outer space and on earth, massive platforms like aircraft carriers and ships, and a technological establishment of astounding sophistication is unparalleled anywhere. Finally, only the United States has the know-how and logistical assets (including such mundane items as transport and refueling aircraft) to conduct large-scale and global operations.

In this respect in particular, analogies with the late 1940's are erroneous; the American lead in military technology is far more extensive today than it was 50 years ago. Advances in civilian technology may eventually subvert that lead, but whether that will occur depends very largely on decisions to be made over the next decade.

STRATEGISTS rarely discuss the cultural dimensions of strategy, but these are in fact a third conditioning force in the strategic environment. For the willingness to use military power and the capacity to amass it depend heavily on a country's culture.

During the cold war, strategic planners could take pretty much for granted the willingness of Americans to engage in world politics, and to contend with the Soviet Union for global hegemony. Even when Americans were not willing, in John F. Kennedy's words, to pay *any* price, or to bear *any* burden, they certainly accepted a military burden unprecedented in our peacetime history. This included assigning between 4 and 10 percent of our gross national product to defense (the historical norm had been closer to 1 or 2

percent); peacetime conscription; the creation of a vast military establishment, including a large standing army; and acceptance of various real and potential infringements on civil liberties. These last included a hedge of laws to protect secrets and the creation of large agencies of government with the ability to spy on Americans overseas and, to a lesser extent, at home as well.

The price was surely worth it, but a price it was. True, Americans have shown no particular eagerness to shed these burdens and structures completely; it may be one of the lesser surprises of the end of the cold war that Americans have become accustomed to world power, and have no intention of giving it up. But it is equally true that Americans will look on global responsibilities with a colder eye, particularly if exertions of military power seem to be efforts on behalf of allies too miserly or timid to fend for themselves.

At the same time, it has become apparent that the United States, and perhaps the West more broadly, are undergoing a crisis of cultural self-confidence similar to those of the 1930's and the 1960's.* The dimensions of this crisis are difficult to sketch, but they surely include the rise of criminality in most Western societies, the erosion of traditional means of socialization (family, church), and a perceptible decay in popular culture. The replacement of fare like *The Andy Griffith Show* by *Beavis and Butthead* is a telling symbol of a deeper and more distressing trend. One quantitative indicator is the rise of illegitimacy which (in the United States, at any rate) also translates into a rise of one-parent families. In 1970, births to unmarried women in the U.S. were 11 percent of all births; today, they are 28 percent.

These cultural trends affect national security in various ways. Among other things, they have induced American leaders to turn inward in the attempt to cope with a society that has lost much of its self-confidence. The election campaign of 1992, the first since 1936 which did not feature foreign affairs as a prominent issue, was an important sign of this change.

To be sure, the significance of the change has so far not penetrated a foreign-policy establishment that continues to hold earnest seminars on American policy vis-à-vis countries 10,000 miles away while ten blocks away thugs have driven all but the pluckiest, most foolhardy, or heavily armed citizens from the street. Indeed, the contrast between the formidable military power of the United States and its violent and disorderly cities suggests the hubris of an ambitious effort to police the world.

In the future, then, we can expect the American public to look askance at foreign adventures that aim to do for others what we have not yet done for ourselves. We can also expect politicians to learn from the experience of George Bush: no amount of success overseas will compensate for failure to solve problems at home.

The diseases afflicting American civilization have not escaped the notice of other nations. Americans tend to discount the cultural hostility of foreign intellectuals and politicians as mere window-dressing. In particular, many American intellectuals shrug off religious belief as a passing obstacle to the development of secular, humanistic, and libertarian societies. Living as we do in the oldest constitutional democracy on the planet, we often assume that American ways—our package of individual liberties and a legalistic political system—must inevitably spread to all countries. These American assumptions will probably fail in the next century. They not only attract the anger of fundamentalist groups in the Islamic world; they have also begun to elicit hostile reactions from other societies, including the far more successful states of Asia.

Conceivably, we may have passed the high-water mark of the spread of American culture around the world, as the United States finds itself increasingly at odds with countries resentful of our attempts to impose a world order that to them looks far from benign or attractive.

Indeed, in what may be the greatest strategic revolution of all, two concepts that the United States itself applied to the Soviet Union—deterrence and containment—may be applied to *it*. Other countries (plus substate and transnational actors) may seek not to contend with the United States for global hegemony, but to keep it out of their spheres of interest and influence. In such struggles, even modest amounts of force, if wielded dexterously and with determination, can thwart the objectives of a morose and troubled American giant.

III. Missions

IN A "Bottom-Up Review," published early in its term, the Clinton administration described the forces it believed the country would require. Based on a cold-war-style analysis, it called for ten Army and three Marine divisions, twelve aircraft carriers, and thirteen active Air Force wings. Civilians occasionally sneer at generals for preparing to fight the last war; here, the analysts played the generals' part, albeit with an elaborate theoretical superstructure.

The chief premise of the Bottom-Up Review was that the conflicts for which the United States should prepare itself would be reruns of the Gulf war of 1991. This proposition, dubious enough for the next five to ten years, becomes absurd if one looks further ahead. And in any case, the projected budget will simply not allow an armed force of that size, or at least one that could be adequately paid, trained, and consistently modernized.

* For evidence, one need only look at the spate of articles in *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 1993) triggered by Samuel P. Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations" (Summer 1993).

The Pentagon has confessed that over the next five years it will fall \$40-billion short of the force called for in the Bottom-Up Review; the Government Accounting Office, probably closer to reality, makes the gap out to be \$150 billion. The 1.4-million-strong force envisioned in the Bottom-Up Review, then, will not survive. In the next ten to fifteen years, the armed forces will shrink to perhaps a million men and women, about 40 percent that of the cold war.

Adjusting to the new size means giving up old structures and radically changing ways of conducting business. Some of the services are deeply reluctant to do so. The Marine Corps, for example, is clinging to a force level of over 170,000 men and women—a third the size of the Army—the maintenance of which will blot out funds for the sorely needed modernization of the Marines' equipment.

Not only will the United States military be smaller than at any time since 1940; it will have to change in other ways as well. In particular, it will have to reduce its reliance on permanent forward deployment of combat units, a policy that was sustainable in an era of a two-million-man force but that will impose insuperable strains on a force half that size. And a smaller military will have to concede that some missions are simply too big for it to handle alone. Indeed, one of the chief strategic choices that the United States faces is that between unilateral and multilateral capabilities.

American defense policy *should* emerge from answers to the question, What kind of world does the United States wish to mold? But it is more likely to emerge from answers to easier questions: What calamities does the United States wish to avert? and, What goals are worth even a modest fight?

From such considerations, four "missions" emerge:

First, the United States will have to think hard about *defense proper*. Since World War II, American strategists have regarded defense with only episodic interest. After a vigorous effort in the area of continental air defense in the 1950's and the attempted development of ballistic-missile defenses in the 1960's, this strategic option lapsed into a state of somnolence. The Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative never attracted wide support, and came under severe criticism for the stress it would place on the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty with the Soviet Union.

Defense in the narrow sense, however, is a long and honorable American strategic tradition. Three waves of fortification—one from the Federalist period through the War of 1812 and its immediate aftermath, another in the 1840's, and a third in the 1880's—provided the United States with admirable protection for its ports. In the early 20th century, much of American military planning focused on the protection of installations such as the Panama Canal.

During the cold war, the balance of American

strategic thinking and military action shifted decisively to the offense, and for good reason: nuclear weapons seemed an overwhelmingly offensive military tool, and political considerations mandated a forward strategy in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. But that has now changed somewhat. The proliferation of long-range ballistic (and, later, cruise) missiles will make it increasingly possible for even small and relatively weak powers to strike at the United States. The technologies of low-level warfare—everything from car bombs to computer-hacking—make it easier to cross the oceanic distances that to this day insulate the United States from many traditional security concerns. The bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in 1993 was, most likely, a sign of things to come.

Large segments of the American military will resist conversion to essentially defensive roles. For one thing, the dominant combat-arms organizations have grown up as forward-deployed, expeditionary forces; this is their definition of what soldiering is. For another, many defensive missions are intrinsically more complicated and less promising than offensive ones; it is easier to build and operate a long-range missile than to defend against it, easier to launch long-raid special operations than to prevent them (and more fun as well).

A SECOND broad mission of the armed forces will be that of *insurance*. The United States today faces no imminent threats, except for the serious but nonetheless contained prospects of war in the Korean peninsula and renewed Iraqi adventurism in the Persian Gulf. But it does face a world of tremendous uncertainty.

Defense planners have attempted to bound such uncertainty by suggesting standards like those contained in the Bottom-Up Review, which calls for the United States to prepare to fight two nearly simultaneous "major regional contingencies." Of course, subsequent examination has showed that American forces would have logistical difficulty enough in sustaining one contingency, and that two would exceed our capabilities. But even if the artificial standards of the Bottom-Up Review did represent achievable targets, this is the wrong way of thinking about our requirements. The essence of insurance is the preservation of certain *competencies*, upon which future forces could be built should they be needed.

To begin with, the United States may, at some juncture, need to deploy substantial land forces overseas, as it did during the Gulf war. In the short term, this is not too likely: following a resolution of the division of the Korean peninsula, it will become less likely still. In general, it should be the task of local allies to defend themselves on the ground, while the United States supplies various kinds of support from air, sea, and space. In a pinch, the United States might provide the high-technology core of a ground expeditionary force,

and the technology and organizations capable of higher-level command and control.

The heavy portion of the U.S. Army should therefore preserve and indeed hone its expertise in ground combat, preparing to serve as the decisive nucleus for multinational forces or, if necessary in the long term, for a larger American force. Such a nucleus would not only be smaller than the Army of today, it would be different. It would consist exclusively of regular forces, as opposed to the Army's current practice of relying heavily on reserve units to support regular units, which makes the force less deployable (because of the political costs associated with reserve mobilizations). It would also be different by virtue of its dependence on other states in the event of a major contingency.

Another broad area of insurance lies in the realm of nuclear weapons. During the cold war, questions of nuclear strategy occupied center stage in the American policy debate. Today, our nuclear forces are the stepchild of a government eager to see them go away, and of a military establishment that has always viewed them with a certain amount of distaste. "The nuclear weapon is obsolete. . . . I want to get rid of them all," said one Air Force four-star general recently. The Navy and Army, in particular, have been delighted to see these awkward devices removed from their European arsenals, for they required specialized handling, posed tremendous operational problems, and made each service, in different ways, unpopular with local allies.

But the genie cannot be so easily put back into the bottle. Many small states will take from the Gulf war the lesson that the best counter to American conventional strength lies in the possession of a nuclear arsenal. To deter the use of such weapons (and, perhaps, chemical and biological ones as well), and if necessary to preempt nuclear forces, the United States will require a small but always modern nuclear force of its own. This ultimately also requires a low-level testing-and-development program, particularly for tactical weapons. By failing to develop and publicly defend small, clean nuclear weapons that might be useful for preemptive destruction of the small, crude arsenals of potential enemies, the Clinton administration may be making one of its most damaging long-term mistakes.

A THIRD mission for the armed forces is the *maintenance of world order*. To a degree not found in any other country, the United States combines military, economic, and cultural power. It will wish to use that power in three ways: to limit, to punish, and to excise.

By *limitation* I mean the denial of certain kinds of capabilities to other countries. For example, the United States, as guarantor of an open commercial order, will wish to prevent other countries (or substate actors) from blocking or interfering with the free use of the sea and air lanes.

What follows from this is, say, the ability to detect and destroy ships, aircraft, or submarines laying mines in the Straits of Hormuz or the Magellan Straits.

The idea of using military power to *punish* does not normally appeal to Americans. But in the future the United States may not wish to change a political situation on the ground through the direct use of force—by occupying a country and pacifying it. Rather, it may wish to affect the calculations of a local troublemaker, or simply lay down a marker for future troublemakers. For example, were the United States to have used military power in the former Yugoslavia early on—at the time of the shelling of Dubrovnik in the fall of 1991—it would have done best not to have placed tens of thousands of troops on the ground but to have used its air and naval power to make the Serbian government suffer at home.

During the cold war, the use of military power for punitive purposes acquired a bad name. To hawks, it smacked of timidity in engaging one's real opponents, and perhaps of a suspect enthrallment to academic notions of force as a mere means of signaling. To doves, it seemed innately cruel and impossible to reconcile with a concept of just war. To both it appeared highly unlikely to be effective. Indeed, the experiences of the Vietnam war seemed to bear out the suspicions of hawks and doves alike.

Here again, however, it is time to reexamine our strategic assumptions. Punitive strategies failed during the cold war because the opponents against whom they were directed were in the grip of a messianic ideology and because they had at their disposal the resources of a superpower and a dozen major clients. Such strategies frequently failed as well because the largely peasant societies against whom they were directed were less vulnerable to the kind of punishment (chiefly bombing and blockade) that the United States could deliver.

Today circumstances are quite different. In the next decade or two, the United States will find itself engaged in what the British once called imperial policing: the maintenance of some rough order in unruly parts of the world. Our future opponents will not have a superpower patron to rebuild their dams and power plants, or to buy them a comprehensive air-defense system. They will probably be more porous societies than the old Communist states—more aware of the world through the mass media—and probably less totalitarian domestically. They will have more sophisticated economies, which means they will have more to lose, and, no less important, they will know that the key to survival lies in some kind of engagement in the world economy, even if not in a completely open fashion.

Within broad limits, strategies of punishment will work to moderate the behavior of such states—to curtail (if not to stop completely) efforts to subvert a neighbor or to mistreat an eth-

nic minority. In addition, the technologies of precision-strike open up new operational concepts for punishment. It is probably feasible, for instance, to damage or destroy most of a country's major road and rail bridges. To be sure, temporary bridges, rafts, and the like will enable the country to continue to function, and even to move armed forces around. But the economic dislocation will inflict considerable pain on society and, ultimately, government.

Finally, the maintenance of world order will require a capability to *excise* certain kinds of capabilities, specifically weapons of mass destruction. In 1991, when the United States went to war against Iraq, it lacked the intelligence and, in some cases, the specialized procedures to attack storage sites for the Iraqi nuclear- and biological-weapons programs. When the war began, American planners had only two Iraqi nuclear targets on their hit lists; by the time International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors had finished their work, *sixteen* main facilities had been identified.

From a purely technical point of view, locating and destroying the capability of countries to use weapons of mass destruction is likely to be an extremely difficult task; this is particularly true in the case of biological weapons, which can be manufactured in small laboratories and distributed clandestinely. But should we ever witness the actual use of such weapons, there will be no choice but to move swiftly, and even at high cost, to prevent their repeated use.

THE fourth and last mission of the armed forces will be *coalition-maintenance*. The U.S. is unique not only in its raw military power but in its ability to call on a wide variety of allies for assistance. These allies, in turn, often make claims on our own military capacity. It is in the American interest to provide key elements of support both to our core allies (for example, the British) and to occasional partners with whom we may have a more mixed relationship.

Indeed, one feature of the new international politics is a far greater ambiguity in our alliances. Thus, while American aircraft operated from Italy to surveil Yugoslav air space, American soldiers in Somalia were wondering whether their Italian colleagues were tipping off the Somali warlord they were attempting to track down.

But it would be almost as foolish to walk away from assisting allies when it is in our interest to do so as it would be to ignore such events when they occur. The United States will want allies for many reasons: to ensure political support at home and minimize opposition abroad to certain uses of force; to tap unique skills or local knowledge; to minimize our own weaknesses; and to shift some of the burdens of world policing to others. At the same time, there are some things that the United States does so well, or some goods it has in such quantity, that other countries will have to go on depending on us for support.

IV. Choices

THESE, then, are the likely purposes of American military power: defense, insurance, the maintenance of world order, and the maintenance of coalitions. What choices will the American government have to make if a much smaller military is to serve these purposes adequately?

The first question for consideration is that of forward presence. During the cold war, the United States became accustomed to stationing vast forces overseas—a third of a million in Europe alone, more than a half-million all told in the mid-1980's. Since the end of the cold war the United States has still kept a substantial force stationed overseas (more than 300,000 men and women all told) and has made increasingly frequent temporary deployments of troops for peacekeeping (as in Macedonia), so-called peacemaking (as in Somalia), and humanitarian intervention (northern Iraq and Rwanda). We have also staged training or showing-the-flag exercises designed to reassure friends or build relations with other countries (e.g., deployments to Kuwait).

This trend has given no sign of abating, as the occupation of Haiti by 10,000 American troops makes clear. Meanwhile, the administration promises to send tens of thousands of American troops to Yugoslavia in support of a peace settlement there, and diplomats talk loosely of a brigade or two on the Golan Heights in support of an Israeli-Syrian peace treaty.

It may be some time before the truly pernicious effects of this overstretching are felt. But one effect is already evident, in the strain imposed on service marriages and on morale. Specialized units suffer particularly: for example, airborne warning-and-control crews deploy overseas 170 days a year, whereas the normal limit is 120. The more forces are tied down in missions that are incidental to war-fighting, the less time and opportunity they will have to develop their combat skills.

One might argue that such activities may serve the purposes of American foreign policy, and provide a sense of mission and purpose for the men and women who undertake them. And it may be argued that in the next decade or two it will be less important that American forces sharpen their skills for all-out warfare.

Nonetheless, such activities exact a price on the organizations that sustain them—including a monetary one. The Haiti escapade will cost at least \$250 million this year in direct costs, not to mention a billion dollars of planned aid to that pathetic demi-island. The deployment to Somalia alone cost \$2.2 billion from 1991 through 1994, and the emergency movement of aid and troops to Rwanda in 1994 gobbled up several hundred million dollars within a couple of months. The recent suspension of all Naval-reserve training because of a shortage of funds to pay reservists is

one of the smaller consequences of these unforeseen expenditures. Such costs come on top of less visible drains, like the Clinton administration's effort to take \$300 million from the defense budget as a contribution to the United Nations' peacekeeping efforts.

What is all too little realized is that these sums come out of the operations and maintenance accounts of the armed services, and have begun cutting into the ability of American forces to train and to keep their equipment in good operating condition. Humanitarian adventurism induces an insidious kind of muscle fatigue, consuming sinew in what appears to be a beneficial exercise.

IT is a cliché of American strategic thinking (and one to which I largely subscribe) that the United States will henceforth fight increasingly as a member of a coalition. But we will find ourselves choosing among different kinds of coalitions—those brought together under the banner of the United Nations; those locked in formal mechanisms of military cooperation such as NATO; and those constructed on an *ad-hoc* basis.

During the Gulf war the Bush administration set a precedent which appears likely to last, and according to which the United States will frequently use the cover of the United Nations for its military actions overseas. The U.S. has benefited both at home and abroad from the air of legitimacy this authority has provided. But if the atmosphere at the United Nations were to deteriorate—for example, if China should choose to exercise its veto in the Security Council—the United States might wind up embarrassed by these precedents. The proper course is likely to be one of pragmatic use of the United Nations if it will provide the necessary support, but a periodic reaffirmation (and even demonstration) of American willingness to act even without its endorsement. A reflexive appeal to the United Nations for legitimacy even in cases abutting the American mainland—as has occurred in Haiti—sets precedents that will be used to confine and restrict American power in the future.

NATO remains the most durable and important of formal American coalitions. In the long run, however, unless Russia reemerges as a threat to the security of Europe, NATO is bound to deteriorate slowly. Europe, as it expands, is likely to have more, not less, difficulty in agreeing on a common foreign and defense policy; the debacle in Bosnia is ample evidence of that. So, too, are the persistent disagreements between Germany and some of its Western neighbors on the expansion of both NATO and the European Union to the East.

Europe's difficulty in acting collectively does not diminish American interest in keeping NATO alive, but alive less as a command structure in time of war than as a means of harmonizing procedures and familiarizing soldiers with one another

in times of peace. NATO's most useful work takes place when soldiers, sailors, and airmen agree on standardized means of issuing orders, controlling air traffic, or managing naval operations.

From this common basis NATO members can operate in *ad-hoc* coalitions on the fringes of Europe, even if not under NATO auspices. The Gulf war, in which the United States managed to coordinate the activities of a half-dozen air forces with the procedures and planning tools devised for use in Europe, demonstrated the value of this experience.

To generalize from the case of NATO: American coalition operations should most often take place through the medium of temporary or local alliances, operating in some cases under a diffuse authority granted by larger organizations, but not dependent upon them.

IF THE path to America's future coalitions is relatively clear, one cannot say as much for military acquisition. The issue here is not so much *how* the Pentagon develops and buys hardware (William Perry's Defense Department deserves credit for trying to streamline a cumbersome process) as in *what* it buys.

There are three broad trade-offs. One is between what one might call mega- and micro-systems. The United States did very well in the cold war with exceedingly large and complex military platforms—aircraft carriers, for example, but also such marvels of modern military technology as the B-2 bomber, the JSTARS surveillance aircraft, or even the M-1 Abrams tank.

For a time, in the 1970's, military reformers argued that the United States was ill-advised to build larger and more complex systems. They pressed instead for the purchase of cheaper aircraft like the single-engine F-16 fighter, or simple diesel-electric submarines, rather than the far more costly F-15 or the Navy's standard nuclear-powered submarine. The "military reformers" were proved wrong, at least insofar as hardware was concerned. In the Gulf war, the more sophisticated aircraft such as the F-111 and the F-15 far outperformed the F-16.

Ironically, however, the tide may have turned in the reformers' favor after they have been driven from the field, thanks to the "revolution in military affairs" discussed earlier. In brief, and to repeat, the advent of "smart weapons"—cruise missiles that can fly hundreds of kilometers and hit with an accuracy of a few meters; off-road mines that can listen for moving vehicles and attack them; remotely-piloted vehicles that can locate targets and bring in artillery fire; cheap glide bombs that can pick their own targets or hit predesignated ones—has wrought a transformation in warfare. Just as massive mainframe computers have lost a great deal of ground to networks of smaller computers engaged in parallel processing, so, too, the future of military technology may turn away from the megasystems and toward net-

works of smaller and cheaper systems linked together by the new information technologies.

This trend toward warfare by micro-system points to a second trade-off, between quality and quantity. As the defense budget falls, the tendency will be to concentrate on smaller numbers of high-value platforms. These are not only aesthetically more satisfying and imposing, but politically more comprehensible. But the true indices of power in the future may lie in the possession of large numbers of cruise missiles and sensors. For as impressive as the performance of individual pieces of equipment may be, the key to their effective use will be their deployment in *quantity*.

This will be so because of those elements of war which Clausewitz termed "friction": malfunctioning of equipment, inadequate intelligence, and enemy countermeasures.

Thus, the January and June 1993 punitive attacks on Baghdad used 69 Tomahawk land-attack missiles and ate up \$75-million worth of ordnance for uncertain, if not negligible, effects. To have real military and hence political effect, American generals will need to be able to launch hundreds of strikes repeatedly over time against enemy targets. Not only will scarce defense dollars have to go to keeping adequate stocks of munitions; the United States will have to be willing to spend large sums on manufacturing technology in order to drive down the costs of individual rounds. Further refinements to a Tomahawk cruise missile may matter much less to its utility as an instrument of military power than to reducing its cost from \$1.2 million to a tenth of that figure.

Large-scale acquisition of the new technologies will be difficult in the face of pressure to keep up substantial forces and to maintain their operations tempo. Indeed, it is acquisition of new hardware that is taking the hardest hits from the Clinton cutbacks. Furthermore, the imperatives of day-to-day operations create pressures contrary to those of a sound, long-term strategy.

From a long-term point of view, for instance, it might be worth having the Navy invest in so-called "arsenal ships"—large, stealthy, semi-submersible vessels densely packed with missiles in vertical launch tubes. Such vessels—which might carry hundreds of rounds, plus reloads—could lurk hundreds of miles from their targets, reprogram their missiles using information transmitted by satellite, and open fire. Yet although an arsenal ship might be a handy vessel to have for actual war-fighting, it is considerably less valuable for showing the flag or administering a blockade.

In the same vein, it makes sense to purchase more than the twenty B-2 bombers now on order by the United States Air Force, and in general to do everything possible to make up for the retirement of older bombers such as the Air Force's F-111 and B-52, and the US Navy's A-6. Bombers,

however, have little utility for shows of force, and none at all for humanitarian rescues or peace-keeping operations.

THE last set of choices before the American defense establishment concerns its most important constituent elements: the armed services. Over the last decade, a consensus has emerged that equates the services with parochial and self-seeking behavior, at odds with the requirements of joint action in war and sound administration in peace. The Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act of 1986, itself the product of several years of debate prompted by congressional dissatisfaction with the Department of Defense's internal management, crystallized this disenchantment.

From Goldwater-Nichols there emerged a system that put increasing power in the hands of the chairman, and even the vice chairman, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, together with the Joint Staff itself, which increasingly came under the direct control and supervision of the chairman. When Congress in 1994 created a commission to examine the roles and missions of the armed services, it complained once again about duplication of effort by the services, and the supposed inefficiencies of their mutual competition.

One might infer from much of the contemporary debate that the ideal armed service would consist of one kind of soldier wearing one uniform. Canada actually experimented with such a system in the mid-1960's, and soon discovered that even in its tiny military there was a natural breakdown among land, sea, and air services. It further discovered that morale suffered from even apparently minor matters like the discarding of traditional uniforms, a decision reversed twenty years later in 1985. (The U.S. Navy relearned this lesson in 1977 when it reinstated the cherished bell-bottom trousers and white sailors' caps taken away in 1971 by a chief of naval operations zealous for efficiency.)

Soldiers, sailors, and airmen inhabit very different worlds, and have very different cultures. This differentiation of service cultures is inevitable, bred by the physical environments in which soldiers, sailors, and airmen operate. It is also highly desirable. There may be no compelling operational requirement for a distinct Marine Corps (armies can conduct amphibious operations with adequate training), but the Marines' élan and professionalism, combined with the peculiar organizational forms they have evolved, make them a unique and invaluable asset. Even when they do the same things the Army does, they do them differently, and occasionally better. And as anyone who has associated with both services knows, each often attracts its own kind of people.

We take it for granted in business that customers will get better service from three or four competing franchises than from a monopoly; we do

not call the existence of several national newspapers a deplorable failure of rationalization, or regard the existence of bicameral legislatures as evidence of inefficient government. In the same way, it is a good thing and not a bad thing to have services compete with one another for such missions as counterinsurgency or theater ballistic-missile defense.

In any case, much of the so-called duplication of the services does not represent unnecessary effort. If the Air Force controlled all combat aircraft, we would probably still have pretty much the same number of airplanes at sea on aircraft carriers, albeit supported by an organization far less familiar with the operating environment than the Navy. Because of the technological flux that characterizes military developments, it makes good sense to let competition, and not a master plan, shape the choices about which organizations take on which new missions.

This does not mean, however, that the current array of services is inevitable or desirable. There may be a case for expanding the number of the services by creating one devoted solely to space and long-range missile operations. And it is surely desirable to shape the competition among the services, which, after all, do not produce their own revenues.

But it must be remembered that it is the services that have the longest-term view. Goldwater-Nichols gave more power to the theater commanders-in-chief (the so-called CINC's), including a voice in making budget decisions. By the nature of their tasks, however, theater commanders, and to some extent even the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have to look to immediate operational concerns and problems—whether, for instance, there is enough airlift to send soldiers to a trouble spot tomorrow. By contrast, a chief of staff of one of the services worries about equipping the force ten years from now.

One supposedly obsolete element of the service structure is the continued existence of service secretaries—civilian heads of the different departments. Too often these posts go to valued presidential campaign contributors, or to figureheads who enable an administration to score points with assorted constituencies. For their part, the uniformed services know very well how to lull their nominal civilian superiors with endless rounds of ceremonial speeches and enjoyable excursions—driving tanks, flying airplanes, conning a submarine.

Yet the secretaries of the services are potentially the most important figures for asserting civilian control over the military. They control (in theory, at any rate) the service personnel and promotional systems. They can, and sometimes do, know the general officers far better than a busy Secretary of Defense or his deputy. And if they do their job well, they can turn military tourism into an intimate knowledge of the working conditions, spirit, and needs of both officer and enlisted ranks.

Admittedly, most civilian secretaries do not measure up in all these ways, but occasionally some do. John Lehman, Secretary of the Navy during the Reagan administration, and Don Rice, Secretary of the Air Force during the Bush administration, though very different men, are examples of just how much important work a competent service secretary can do.

V. Civil-Military Relations

ONE reason good service secretaries are needed now more than ever is that American civil-military relations seem to be undergoing long-term deterioration. This has been noted by a number of observers and is evident in dozens of incidents: the failure of Admiral Frank Kelso, chief of naval operations, to retire despite the request of his superior, Secretary of the Navy John Dalton, that he do so; the instruction by General Barry McCaffrey, commander of U.S. Southern Command, that his subordinates report to him and not (as the law requires) to the ambassadors in their respective countries. The Clinton administration has managed at once to show a lack of understanding of the military and on occasion even a contempt for it, while meekly submitting to insubordinate behavior by all too many of its members.

But the problem goes far deeper. It was evident in the willingness of Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, publicly to oppose government policy in Yugoslavia, and it appeared in the generally hostile attitude of military staffs to both press and civilian policy-makers during the Gulf crisis. It has been reported as well in the writings of thoughtful officers like Colonel Charles Dunlap, Jr., especially in his disturbing (and prizewinning) fantasy, "The Origins of the American Military Coup of 2012."^{*}

What are the sources of the contemporary dis-temper? One is the trauma of Vietnam. Only 40 percent of draft-age men served in the military during that war; of this group, only a quarter (that is, 10 percent of all draft-age men) went to Vietnam, and a rather small minority of these saw combat. The artful public reconciliation of the Reagan years, replete with parades and the construction of a Vietnam memorial, together with the mere passing of time, has smoothed over the overt consequences of that war. But if one probes deeper, down to the organizational culture of the American defense establishment, one finds scars that will not fade.

For American soldiers—even for those who did not serve during the war—Vietnam is an *ur*-memory. Believing as they do that the United States had never before lost a war, American officers

^{*} *Parameters* (Winter 1992-93). See also Dunlap's article, "Welcome to the Junta: The Erosion of Civilian Control of the U.S. Military," *Wake Forest Law Review* (Summer 1994).

feel a certain humiliation at the failure of American arms to reduce to submission an impoverished country with barely a tenth of our population. Many, and probably most, are convinced that this failure stemmed in large part from the interference of civilians in the conduct of the war, and from the failure of politicians to assign clear guidelines for waging it.

The debacles of the Lebanon intervention in the early 1980's and the Somali intervention a decade later, though far smaller in scale, have only confirmed these lessons. Quixotically conceived and erratically executed acts of social work masquerading as strategy, such as the Haitian occupation, reinforce soldiers' suspicion that politicians do not understand the military instrument's limitations, or comprehend the damage that misuse does to it. And officers are very well aware that the Vietnam experience corroded the morale, discipline, and professional expertise of the military itself. It took at least a decade to repair the damage.

On the other side, politicians, particularly those of the Vietnam generation who evaded service there (probably the majority in both parties of that age cohort), are often shy of exerting strenuous civilian control. Accepting, as many do, the military assessment of the war—an evaluation that actually has less merit than one might think—they fear the penalties of putting a now-popular military in harm's way under any but benign circumstances. For both soldiers and politicians, the model of the Gulf war is the one to follow: conducting a war for nominally limited and concrete (although in reality ambiguous) objectives, with overwhelming force, against an enemy who has been completely isolated and who, indeed, practically invites attack.

THERE is a further factor to be considered here. The American government, and in some ways even the military itself, poorly comprehended the enormous relative advantage we had over the Iraqis in the Persian Gulf. For military technology is becoming increasingly obscure, and military assessment increasingly recondite.

In the old days one could in some fashion count items—battleships, tanks, heavy bombers—and have a rough sense of what kind of power they purchased. Today, one missile may look very much like another, and a great deal of combat takes place invisibly, in the jamming of radars or the cloaking of planes, ships, and tanks by exotic materials and design. And as fewer and fewer politicians bring any kind of military experience of their own to bear, civilians find themselves increasingly dependent on military staffs. At the same time, civilian leaders put a premium on finding senior officers who mouth the right formulas about matters of gender and race.

This mixture of politicians' incomprehension on the one hand, and their desire for sycophancy

on the other, poses long-term risks. One can imagine the emergence out of this of an officer corps, leading members of which identify themselves, if not with political parties, then with politicians. Indeed, in the 1992 election this occurred, as retired officers lined up behind presidential candidates with little thought to the pernicious consequences of their actions.

The evolution of warfare itself may produce further challenges. As we have seen, one of the few burgeoning areas of military thought and activity is "information warfare"—the conduct of conflict through the manipulation (and not merely the interception or exclusion) of information. Future tools of information warfare will include satellite television broadcasts, the disruption of financial systems, the forging of all kinds of electronic messages, and the corruption of databases. It is the kind of activity that mischievous teenagers and greedy computer wizards have engaged in for decades now. The military, being as large and efficient as it is, can carry such activities to new heights, and increase the role played by the American military in a variety of everyday transactions.

At a lower level, other kinds of frictions will occur. Elite commando units worry about their members—trained in the black arts of breaking and entering, not to mention other, far nastier criminal skills—going bad. It has rarely happened, in part thanks to successful screening and training; but as the military breeds more information warriors, one wonders if such screening will continue to be effective. The temptations of computer hacking are far wider and stronger (among other things, it is much less violent and can be far more lucrative) than, say, assassination for pay. Far more worrisome, however, is the possibility that a military fighting the shadowy battles of "information warfare" may find itself engaging the country in foreign-policy tangles of a particularly messy kind.

None of this is to suggest that the United States has a rogue military, or anything like it. Quite the contrary. In many ways this is the most acutely self-aware armed force the country has ever known, and one which (in part) worries a good deal about its relationship with the broader society. As the Gulf war demonstrated, its leaders are far more politically astute and sensitive to the imperatives of foreign policy than their predecessors of bygone generations.

The difficulty is much more on the other side, in the absence of a civilian class familiar with military matters and comfortable with military people. As a generation that served in the military yields its place in public life to one whose members not only have not served but probably do not know anyone who has, an unfortunate gap grows. It is the civilians, not the soldiers, who have abdicated their responsibilities.

How to remedy matters? One recourse may be to increase the intermixing of civilians and sol-

diers by sending more civilians—not just civil servants but journalists, congressional staffers, business people, and others—for year-long stints in the country's war colleges. Another might be the deliberate creation and preservation of routes for brief active duty or longer-term reserve duty by young men and women who will, later on, become this country's civic leaders. Yet another course might be a more extensive use of programs that place soldiers in educational and even business institutions for a year or two at a time.

ONE of the chief legacies of the cold war was a narrowing of debate about national defense to an obsession with weapon systems (should we buy cheap single-engine fighters or more costly twin-engine fighters?) or simply the bottom line of the defense budget. This cramping of debate resulted from the existence of an altogether desirable consensus about the essential parameters of the defense problem. All responsible people agreed that the United States should have a very large military, that it should be forward-deployed, that it should be embedded in NATO, and so on.

That consensus helped win the cold war. But it has resulted in the atrophy of our capacities for a debate of the kind that occurred at the turn of the century, when the United States became a great power, or in the late 1940's, when the United States accepted its status as a superpower.

In the absence of events forcing our hand, we may find it hard to engage in such comprehensive self-scrutiny, and it is even conceivable that in the short term we will pay no large penalty. In a longer view, however—say, twenty years—matters may be different. If Francis Fukuyama's famous verdict turns out to be right, and we do in fact reach the end of history, defined as the rise of essentially pacific liberal-democratic states, all this concern about defense will seem an atavism, a survival of an older and bloodier age. The

greater wisdom, however, may rest with Winston Churchill, who once wrote:

Certain it is that while men are gathering knowledge and power with ever-increasing and measureless speed, their virtues and their wisdom have not shown any notable improvement as the centuries have rolled. The brain of a modern man does not differ in essentials from that of the human beings who fought and loved here millions of years ago. The nature of man has remained hitherto practically unchanged. Under sufficient stress—starvation, terror, warlike passion, or even cold intellectual frenzy, the modern man we know so well will do the most terrible deeds. . . . We have the spectacle of the powers and weapons of man far outstripping the march of his intelligence; we have the march of his intelligence proceeding far more rapidly than the development of his nobility. We may find ourselves in the presence of the strength of civilization without its mercy.

In the wreckage of Saddam Hussein's extensive nuclear program, in the dimly glimpsed transactions of Russian plutonium merchants, in the anonymous ferocity of those who bomb office buildings in New York and Argentina, one catches flashes of what "the strength of civilization without its mercy" may look like.

Beyond these menaces of the next decade, others may await us. Soon science will open up fantastic new possibilities—say, in the development of biological weapons and in the manipulation of human life itself—that some men or states will almost certainly turn to evil ends. Surely, it would be rank folly to shrug aside the possible rise of a Napoleon, a Hitler who would cunningly exploit "perverted science," as Churchill called it. And lesser men—the Milosevics, Husseins, and Aids—will make trouble enough.

All the more reason, then, to break the habits of the cold war and prepare to meet a possibly less dangerous but almost certainly more turbulent age.

Israel Against Itself

Hillel Halkin

A FEW days after the recent death at the age of ninety-one of Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, biochemist, theologian, and indefatigable public gadfly, I spied the following notice on the Jerusalem street where he lived:

Blessed Be the True Judge

With Much Sorrow We Announce the Death
Of the Great Thinker Yeshayahu Leibowitz
Who Was Among the Regular Worshipers
In the Central Yeshurun Synagogue
Of Jerusalem.

In the outpouring of encomia that followed Leibowitz's death, such praise for him was not at all extravagant. There was perhaps one odd thing about it—namely, that most members of the Yeshurun synagogue belong to what is known as “the national religious camp,” a sector of Israeli society for which Leibowitz had considerable contempt.

But since Leibowitz had considerable contempt for most of Israeli society, this was part of a larger question. And that was: how could a man who was an interesting polemicist but an undistinguished scientist and far from a “great thinker”—who indeed exhibited little intellectual subtlety to speak of—have grown so esteemed by a country denounced by him for decades? Indeed, Israel's media heaped upon his grave such epitaphs as “prophet,” “intellectual giant,” “revered spiritual shepherd,” “great giver of answers,” and “the most luminous intelligence of his times,” while no less a personage than the president of the state of Israel proclaimed him “One of the major figures in the life of the Jewish people in recent generations.”

The death notice on Ussishkin Street notwithstanding, it is a fact that Leibowitz, most of whose writings were concerned with religious issues, was largely ignored in his lifetime by Israel's religious community, while becoming a guru for part of its secular Left. One reason for this, I have always

suspected, was that, as a hyper-rationalist who aimed many of his sharpest barbs at the neo-Hasidism associated with Martin Buber and his followers, Leibowitz made Judaism seem so drudgingly joyless an affair that his nonobservant readers could happily congratulate themselves on their wisdom in having avoided it. Jewish ritual and belief, as described by Leibowitz, are an unrewarded exercise in unquestioning obedience to the incomprehensible commandments of an unfathomable God, a formula that undoubtedly salvaged more than one secular conscience for knowing and caring nothing more about them.

But it was Leibowitz's politics rather than his theology that made him a nationally known figure. A critic of Israeli “militarism” even before the Six-Day War of 1967, he was one of the first to declare almost immediately after victory that the war had been a “national catastrophe,” and his opposition to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and to the “fascistic” settlers who built their lives there, grew more extreme with time. Unlike many critics of Israeli rule over the Palestinians, Leibowitz strongly backed the refusal of soldiers to do army service in the occupied territories, and accused those who failed to join him of political and moral cowardice. More than anything, it was his untiring support of the small group of conscientious objectors sent to Israeli military jails from the early 1980's on that won him an admiring following among the hard-core Left.

Post hoc, ergo propter hoc: now that the belief that Israel must return all the territory acquired by it in the 1967 war, until recently an act held to be unthinkable by a great majority of the country's population, has become the guiding policy of the Rabin-Peres government, it should perhaps surprise no one that Leibowitz, long treated as a marginal crank by the political and cultural establishment which he called “Judeo-Nazi” during the years of the *intifada*, has been buried by it with full honors. (Actually, the process of rehabilitation started two years ago, when he was offered—and, after a national brouhaha, declined to accept—the prestigious Israel Prize for intellectual and cultural achievement.)

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NONETHELESS, although he was an early and vociferous critic of Israel's occupation of the territories, Leibowitz was by no means the only one, even in 1967, and there were others who argued later for conscientious objection. Whence, then, the virtual beatification of him? When the saints go marching in, it is true, someone must stride at their head; but why Leibowitz?

As a theologian, Leibowitz's lifelong mentor was the 12th-century Maimonides, whose insistence on the unknowability of God, and the absurdity of seeking traces of the Divine in the phenomenal world, he shared. Not only was Jewish mysticism, as found in the Kabbalah and in Hasidism, anathema to him; he adamantly rejected as "idolatrous" the inclination to treat anything material, let alone such aggregate bodies as the people or the land of Israel, as a numinous reification of spirituality.

In a 1975 essay, "The Uniqueness of the Jewish People," Leibowitz spoke of "two traditions of interpretation" in Judaism, a true one descending "from Moses via Maimonides" and a false one of "racist-nationalist chauvinism" identified by him with figures like the 12th-century poet-philosopher Yehuda Halevi and the 16th-century Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague. "Ultimately," Leibowitz wrote in a typical passage there,

nothing is holy in the world . . . [except] sanctity [that] stems from [obeying] a commandment of the Creator. [The belief in numinousness] is what distinguishes pagan religiosity from true religiosity. For pagan religiosity [alone] land itself may be holy.

And just to make sure that no one missed the reference to Jewish settlement in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, he added: "I am aware that this paganism is spreading like wildfire today, affecting even many who, subjectively, are believing Jews."

Although the thrust of this argument has much in common with the anti-Zionism of ultra-Orthodoxy, Leibowitz always insisted that he was a Zionist. The paradox of his position lay in Zionism's being for him a strictly secular proposition—a mere "expression," as he wrote elsewhere, "of our being fed up with being ruled by *goyim*." Casting off the yoke of the "*goyim*" justified, in his opinion, the struggle for Jewish political independence; but any attribution of religious significance to such independence, or to the Jewish state embodying it, was again "idolatry."

In developing this argument, Leibowitz had in mind another Jewish theologian who, like Buber, is constantly targeted in his writings even when not mentioned there by name: Abraham Isaac Hachohen Kook, chief rabbi of Palestine from 1921 to 1935. Kook's mystical speculations about the divine purposes unwittingly served by secular Zionism became the ideological cornerstone of "national religious" thought in general and of the

post-1967 religious settlement movement in particular.

Here lies the real significance of Leibowitz for the constellation in Israeli life that is now ready to relinquish in advance any Jewish claims to the territories taken in 1967, and to exchange them in their entirety for peace treaties with the Palestinians and Israel's Arab neighbors. The anti-Zionism of the ultra-Orthodox has always viewed all Jewish territorial demands in Palestine as illegitimate, but it has played no role in Israeli public discourse. Much of the Zionist Left has also objected consistently to basing such territorial demands on Jewish history or tradition, but its militant secularism has limited the audience for its argument. Leibowitz alone worked out a position that was both religious *and* ostensibly Zionist while denying any claim to the land of Israel based on the belief system of Judaism. "The attempt to justify such a right on historic grounds," he wrote, "has neither legal nor moral validity."

It was the perceived weight of Leibowitz's religious authority that could allow a politician like Shulamit Aloni, Minister of Culture in the Rabin government and titular head of the left-wing Meretz party, to risk quoting approvingly his disdainful reference to Jericho in the Jordan Valley, an area rich with Jewish historical memories and one that all previous Israeli governments had proclaimed their intention of retaining for reasons of security, as "the city of Rahab the [Canaanite] harlot," to which no sane Israeli could feel a connection. And it was this same authority that made Labor Knesset member Avraham Burg—himself both an observant Jew from a "national religious" background and a territorial dove whose politics would be intellectually incoherent without the writings of Leibowitz—call the latter "a moral compass." The installation of this compass on the bridge of the Jewish ship of state is, one might say, the implicit goal of the campaign of adulation that followed Leibowitz's death.

2.

IN TERMS of the immanent logic of Orthodoxy, Leibowitz proposed nothing outrageous. It was reasoning similar to his, after all, that led many in the Orthodox religious community in Europe and Palestine to fight Zionism tooth-and-nail right up to the Holocaust, while scornfully rejecting the synthesizing dialectic of Rabbi Kook. Conversely, a large part of Zionism's conscious revolt against Orthodoxy was precisely its battle to wrest traditional Jewish concepts and symbols from religion's grip and appropriate them for itself.

"The Land of Israel," "the Exile," "the return to Zion," "the ingathering of the exiles"—it was

by recontextualizing the mythopoetics of Jewish tradition, and placing them at the service of a secular nationalism, that the Zionist movement was able to harness the dreams and energies of Diaspora Jews. From the point of view of the fiercer guardians of tradition, this may have been an impious hoax; but it was one without which there would today be no state of Israel and no common future for that great majority of the Jewish people which does not accept tradition's behests.

All societies—and none so much as modern ones like our own that are consciously engaged in redefining their relationship to the past—live by collective myths that legitimate group norms precisely to the extent that they are perceived not as myths but as self-evident truths. Thus, when one speaks today of Israel's entering a "post-Zionist age," one is speaking of the fact that the central myths of Zionism, which for four or five generations successfully linked Jewish settlement in Palestine, and the existence of the state of Israel, to 3,000 years of Jewish history, no longer speak to much of Israeli society and its current political leadership.

Granted, intellectual propositions rarely determine the practical calculations of politicians. But when one considers the astonishing retreat made by the Labor government in the past two years from a seemingly solid national consensus against returning to the 1967 borders, as well as the rapidity with which this national consensus itself has crumbled, it seems evident that so hurried a turnabout could never have occurred had not the intellectual ground for it been well prepared in advance.

This "ground-clearing" was the subject of a recent article in the liberal newspaper *Ha'aretz*. There the Israeli author Aharon Megged, long a supporter of the Labor party, observed that since the Six-Day War, not only Leibowitz but "hundreds of [Israel's] leading writers, intellectuals, academics, authors, and journalists . . . have been unceasingly and diligently preaching that [Israel's] case is not just," while participating in an "assault on Zionist legitimacy [by] the denial of the historic link of our people with the land of our forefathers." And yet "without this link," Megged continued,

We would not have come here and would have nothing to do here. . . . Our right to the land does not give us leave to rule people who have dwelt in it for many generations, or to deprive them of their rights. It is understandable that there has been moral outrage in large segments of the Israeli public against acts of oppression and injustice inflicted on residents of the territories we occupied in a war forced upon us. But since the Six-Day War, and at an increasing pace, we have witnessed . . . a [growing tendency on the part of Israeli intellectuals to] regard religious, cultural, and emotional affinity to the land—the most important ratio-

nale for our existence here—with sheer contempt. They see it as contaminated by nationalism, fundamentalism, fetishism, and even fascism.

For an American reader to appreciate the essential accuracy of Megged's remarks, it is not necessary to review hundreds of unknown names. Suffice it to sample this past year's Hebrew best-seller list, which was topped by the four Israeli authors who are also those most frequently read in translation abroad.

Of these four, three—Amos Oz, A. B. Yehoshua, and David Grossman—have been active for years on the extreme "dovish" Left and have published books and articles attacking the very principle, to say nothing of the reality, of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. The fourth, Meir Shalev, writes a weekly newspaper column that has been even more caustic on the subject of the settlers. Indeed, Shalev's well-written and highly successful novel, *The Blue Mountain*, which has quickly become a standard literary text in Israeli schools, deals with an earlier generation of settlers, that of the Jewish farmers in the Valley of Jezreel in the 1910's and 20's, and is a parodic send-up of the "myth" of Jewish agricultural pioneering in Palestine, long pointed to with pride as one of Zionism's most impressive achievements.

ALTHOUGH Megged too is a novelist, his article in *Ha'aretz* deals primarily with the writing of history, and specifically with the group that has come to be known in recent years as the "new Israeli historians." Clustered in this category are a number of investigators, some coming from universities and others from the world of journalism. With the aid of newly-opened Israeli government and Zionist archives, such figures have taken to reexamining standard Israeli accounts of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict, Israel's relations with its Arab neighbors, etc., in much the same spirit as revisionist historians in the United States attacked accepted American versions of the cold war a decade earlier. While not all belong to a specific school of thought, all have questioned conventional Zionist interpretations of the past in the name of newly-gained historical knowledge and have reached, according to Megged, a "conclusion [that] is almost uniform: that in practice Zionism amounts to an evil, colonialist conspiracy to exploit the people dwelling in Palestine, enslave them, and steal their land."

In this, it must be said, Megged is not entirely fair. Whatever their politics, at least some of the authors he accuses are serious scholars. If anything, the dismayed responses evoked by their work lead one to reflect that Zionism may have sinned less by certain things that it did than by its embarrassment over having done them, which led to the manufacture of piously propagandistic leg-

ends that could only breed disillusionment in the end.

Of course—as official Israel denied and as a “new historian” like Benny Morris documents in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*—Arabs were deliberately expelled from certain Jewish areas in 1948-49. Though “ethnic cleansing” deservedly has a bad name, a good case can be made that without a limited amount of it, the new Jewish state would have found itself in 1948 with all the problems of 1967, including an *intifada* that would have begun in the 1950’s.

Similarly, there is much to be said for the policy of David Ben-Gurion, described at length by a “new historian” like Avi Shlaim in *The Politics of Partition*, of seeking to negotiate a division of Palestine with King Abdullah of Transjordan behind the world’s and the Palestinians’ backs. As the Hebrew University political scientist Meron Benvenisti, an observer far from unsympathetic to the Palestinian cause, has written:

Paradoxically, the “new historians” retroactively strengthen the case for [the more forthright approach of Zionists like Ze’ev] Jabotinsky and his followers, who were never in need of prophylactic myths and explanations to soften a harsh reality. If [Ben-Gurion and other leaders] had spoken more honestly at the time, there would be less sanctimonious head-shaking today over what happened.

In any event, Israel has for many years now been in the throes of a concerted enterprise of “demythologization” that has left few Zionist legends intact, from the heroic sagas of the first waves of immigration at the turn of the century to the Israeli army’s laureled rescue mission to Entebbe in 1976. Nor is this in itself necessarily a bad thing. Praiseworthy is the people that wants to know and be told the truth about its past, and no cause that cannot withstand the impact of the truth is ultimately worth fighting for.

Nevertheless, there is no denying that the “new history” has often been written with ulterior aims. As was admitted by Tom Segev, himself a “new historian” whose *The Seventh Million* accuses Zionist and Israeli leaders of unscrupulously exploiting and distorting the history of the Holocaust for political ends, the real quarrel between the “old” and “new” historians is less over what actually happened in the past than it is

a political argument in the narrow Israeli sense of the word . . . a struggle between different positions toward the Israel-Arab conflict. The first stage of this debate began [as a result of the expansion of Jewish settlement in the territories] during the Begin period; the present stage has erupted against the background of the decisions that must be taken within the framework of the peace process. It is thus a highly concrete argument, dealing with the roots of the war for Palestine, which has not yet been brought to its conclusion; those par-

ticipating in it are ostensibly arguing over the past, but they are really talking about the present and the future. . . . There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the fact that a [large] part of the new historians can be easily identified with the Left of the political map, while their opponents are identified with the Right.

The problem, unfortunately, is that superimposed upon this metaphorical map is a real one, the lines of which represent such things as actual rivers, mountain chains, and valleys. Once they are determined by the negotiations currently in process and the resolve of the parties involved, the Jews of Israel will have to live within those lines, and possibly to defend themselves, for a very long time to come.

3.

TO AN observer, the most puzzling feature of the Rabin government’s apparent willingness to pull back to Israel’s old borders and see the settlements beyond them dismantled has been the question of the Golan Heights.

In the case of the West Bank, a strong argument can be presented on both military and historical grounds for retaining at least some of the area and insisting on the right of Jews to live securely in all of it. But there are also strong countervailing arguments: the difficulty of democratically absorbing large numbers of hostile Palestinians; the problematics of depriving a tiny Palestinian state of a good part of what little territory stands to be allotted to it; the naiveté of assuming that Jews can exist safely under Arab rule anywhere; the international pressure on Israel to meet Palestinian demands deemed just by the world; etc. The Rabin-Arafat pact, the logic of which points to an eventual surrender of the entire West Bank, and ultimately of Arab Jerusalem too, may yet prove to have been a grave mistake—but it is at least an understandable one.

Not so the Golan. Here there is no Arab population except for a few thousand not particularly unhappy Druze who were granted full Israeli citizenship when the region was annexed by a vote of the Knesset in 1981. There is no moral reason to restore a region of great strategic value, and one that has been economically developed by Israeli settlers, to a Syrian government that used it solely as a military springboard against Israel and to a Syrian people for whom it represents less than half of 1 percent of the total land area of their country. And there is no serious international pressure on Israel to capitulate to a dictatorial regime that has been heavily involved in international terror.

Yet, in violation of their 1992 campaign promises, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres decided to jettison the Golan, and to let the Syrians know even before

serious negotiations began that this was their intention; and they did so entirely, it would seem, on their own inspiration.

Obviously, a peace treaty with Syria at the present juncture is impossible without giving up the Golan, but less obvious is what the urgency is for such a treaty when both the Jordanians and the Palestinians have made it clear to President Assad of Syria that they do not intend to wait for him in dealing with Israel. Surely there is no pressing need for Israelis to tour Damascus or for an insignificant amount of trade to cross the Israeli-Syrian border as it has been crossing the Israeli-Egyptian border since 1982. Nor can the calculation be that, by returning the Golan, Israel will avoid risking military defeat in a war begun by Syria. Every military analyst knows that, as long as the Golan remains in Israeli hands, a Syria fighting by itself has little chance of overcoming Israel or of permanently winning back lost territory.

Prime Minister Rabin, it is said by those close to him, is afraid of an "eastern alliance," a Syrian-Iraqi-Iranian gang-up on Israel under the banner of Muslim fundamentalism, and wishes to forestall such a development by luring Syria into the Western camp with the Golan as his bait. An intriguing theory—but, if true, a foolish one.

Which, after all, are the two Arab states most threatened today by fundamentalists? Are they not Algeria and Egypt, the former one of the most Westernized of all Arab countries and the latter an American ally that made peace with Israel in exchange for the return of Sinai? What reason is there to think that Syria *with* the Golan Heights will be more immune to the threat of a fundamentalist takeover some day than Syria without it? If the military specter of Muslim fundamentalism is so great, the imperative of retaining the Golan as a fortified buffer against it becomes even greater.

CAN the Prime Minister have other reasons for so badly wanting a formal peace with Syria? One assumes that he too reads *Ha'aretz*, and saw there a front-page advertisement on September 11 paid for by a member of Kibbutz Kinneret, which faces the Golan Heights across the Sea of Galilee. The ad was addressed jointly to him and to Knesset member Eli Goldshmidt, an ex-kibbutznik belonging to a minority faction in the Labor party that opposes the total concessions on the Golan that the Prime Minister seems ready to make. (Goldshmidt subsequently knuckled under to pressure from Rabin and withdrew from active participation in the group.) It said:

To Yitzhak Rabin

Continue on Your Brave Way.
Continue to Lead the Caravan
And Pay No Heed to the Barking Dogs.

To Eli Goldshmidt

I Never Thought That You Would Stand
At the Head of the Torpedoers of Peace.
All the Good Things That You Have Done
Are Dwarfed by a Single Drop of Blood
Shed by One Soldier in Lebanon,
Have no Value When Set against One Tear
Of a Mother Worried for Her Son.

Before I am asked what can be the significance of a political ad placed by a single person, let me emphasize that, given the current division of public opinion in Israel, most readers of a paper with the political views of *Ha'aretz* would have nodded with visceral approval when they read the above words. They would have done so even if too young to remember that the old Russian proverb, "The dogs bark and the caravan passes," was for years a favorite slogan of Zionist activists and of those elements in the Israeli government that called for tough stands toward the Arabs despite the criticism of the world.

But this irony is hardly the most remarkable thing about the ad. *That* is the fact that, using the rhetoric of old-fashioned Zionism, it tells us that the retention of a militarily invaluable area like the Golan Heights, dotted with ancient Jewish villages and synagogues, taken with heavy casualties in 1967 and defended with even greater heroism and loss of life in 1973, is not worth the life of a single Israeli soldier killed by Syrian-backed Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon—no, not even a scratch on that soldier's hand! As if the latter were a conscript serving in the army of the czar, his sole responsibility to the Jewish people, it would appear, is to keep out of danger and get home to his anxious mother as quickly as possible.

IT WOULD be hard to imagine a better example of what Daniel Elazar, director of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, has called in a recent essay the "new privatism [in Israel] that does not encourage great public purposes or individual sacrifice for public tasks." "The end of Zionism," Elazar writes there,

was bound to come, given the trends in the world against the old ideologies . . . the decline of the possibility for religious or national exclusivism in a world increasingly interdependent in every way, where mass communications and pop culture enter into every corner and drive out local cultures, even those rooted for centuries. But all of these trends have been exacerbated by the non- or anti-Zionists within the Israeli peace camp who see in the goals and values of Zionism, as in those of Judaism much more generally, their *bête noire*. They have been trying to undermine Zionism for years, painting the Zionist enterprise in the blackest of hues. The peace process has opened the gates for them to express themselves more sharply on behalf of a goal that

seems equally popular to much of the Israeli public.

But a "trend exacerbated," one might say, is precisely what Zionism, too, has always been. For while its own historians have tended to stress its uniqueness, it has been synchronized throughout its history with the broader *Zeitgeist* that nourished it. In the last decades of the 19th century, this was the spirit of *risorgimento* and of colonial adventure and conquest; in the first half of this century, of the great collectivist movements of the Left and Right; in the years immediately after World War II, of anti-colonial nationalism and, later on, of the battle of national wills that was the cold war.

In all of these epochs, Zionism appealed to its adherents by making them feel that their lives were in accord with, indeed often in the vanguard of, the most deeply felt truths of their times. But the deepest felt truth of *our* times, with their post-nationalist economics of consumerism and their technologies of the global village, may be the idea that between the level of the single individual and the level of the entire human race there is nothing to demand our allegiance. If so, then there may also no longer be anything left in the contemporary world to nourish Zionism.

In this sense, the new privatism and the new anti-Zionism are one and the same phenomenon. Half-echoing Leibowitz (who would have scoffed, however, at the second half of the proposition), an author like Amos Oz tells us that "there is no such thing as the holiness of land, there is only the holiness of man." Beneath the loftiness of his language, though I dare say this was hardly his intention, he is merely authenticating the shift of mythologies that has accompanied the great cultural changes of the age.

A country that regards the life of a single citizen as being worth nothing may not deserve to be defended. But a country that regards the life of a single citizen as being worth everything may end up declining to defend itself. (Curiously enough, though, when the same citizen is killed in his private car on the roads—Israel has one of the world's worst accident rates—his death is accepted by even the peckiest of doves as a routine cost of modern life.) *This*, I submit, may be the real apprehension of Israel's Prime Minister.

To judge by his frequent ominous references to Syrian missiles raining down on Tel Aviv and making Saddam Hussein's Scuds look like "child's play," Yitzhak Rabin has taken what he deems to be the lessons of the Gulf war to heart. For that war against an Arab country, in which Israel took no active part, is ironically the one war in its history that it lost, not only in terms of the damage done to its powers of deterrence by its passivity when attacked, but even more so by the behavior of its once steelier-nerved populace. While suffering scarcely a single missile-caused death, Israelis

fled Tel Aviv in droves and dutifully spent much of the war hunkered behind gas masks in airtight rooms against an improbable danger.

A Syrian super-Scud attack on Tel Aviv, Prime Minister Rabin seems to fear, would cause such public panic that his or any other Israeli government would be forced to sue for terms long before the Israeli army could reach Damascus. In that case, it is logical to ask, is it not better to avoid such a debacle and cut the best possible deal now with the Syrians, who do not yet speak the language of the holiness of man, before they realize the full extent of Israel's vulnerability?

4.

INDEED, since 1967 Israel has been afflicted by what might be called a worsening condition of national schizophrenia, in which outwardly the country—which went through four wars, the *intifada*, and innumerable terror attacks in this period—was still living in a Zionist heroic age while inwardly it was more and more conducting its daily business by the cultural codes of the advanced capitalist West.

On one level, this split has expressed itself in the widening gap between an increasingly less nationalistic secular public and an increasingly more nationalistic religious public. Together, these two publics have played out, as it were, two halves of a single historical situation which the country has been unable to integrate. On another level, the split can be perceived in the lives of many members of the secular public itself, who have increasingly found themselves figuratively—and sometimes literally—going back and forth from army camp to shopping mall. Such a growing tension must cause something to snap in the end, as it did when the Labor government embarked on its present course.

Israel needs peace just as the Arab countries do and should make every reasonable effort to achieve it, including painful concessions when these are absolutely necessary and are balanced by similar compromises on the other side. But the three basic rules of the art of negotiation, as anyone who has ever bargained in an Arab *souk* understands, are: first, always know in advance what your bottom line is, while keeping this knowledge from the other side; second, never appear too eager to buy or to sell what the other side wishes to sell or to buy; and third, be ready to get up and walk away whenever the final price offered is not right.

In its haste to arrive at a comprehensive peace with the Arab world that it apparently believes Israel is too weak to afford to wait for any longer, the Rabin government, first at Oslo and later in its subsequent dealings with the Palestinians and

the Syrians, has violated each of these rules repeatedly.

One can only hope that it does not prove necessary to read, in some history book of the future:

As the 20th century neared its end and the Arab world began grudgingly to accept Israel's existence and to seek to make peace with it, Israel found itself in an internal conflict between its traditional Zionist determination to secure a Jewish state within militarily and historically meaningful borders and its post-Zionist desire for a normalization of life on the American and West European model. Given the steady attrition of the first state of mind and the steady strengthening of the second, the eventual outcome of the conflict was inevitable. But unfortunately for the country, this outcome was unnecessarily accelerated by the beliefs and actions of its leaders, who thus seriously undermined their own bargaining position in the negotiations then in progress with the Arab states.

In consequence, in return for the diplo-

matic recognition of its neighbors and certain security arrangements on their part, Israel agreed to return to its 1967 borders on all fronts, acquiesce in the establishment of a Palestinian state with the eastern half of Jerusalem as its capital, and remove all Jewish settlers from the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip.

Deprived of the military advantages of the Golan and the Jordan Valley with its controlling hills, and expelled from the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria, the country, its overcrowded population concentrated in the narrow coastal strip between the state of Palestine and the sea, experienced not a sense of well-being after peace was concluded but a profound moral and psychological malaise. Thus, it was ill-prepared to resist demands presented to it at a later date that it cede the heavily Arab-populated Galilee to Palestine and the southern Negev to Egypt, in order to create a land bridge between the eastern and western halves of the Arab world. The results can be seen in the maps on the following page. . . .

How the Cold War Really Ended

Joshua Muravchik

UP UNTIL 1990, the great divide of American politics for at least 25 years, and perhaps 45, was between hawks and doves. Whatever the relative weight of international or domestic issues in one electoral race or another, the transcendent issue of the age was the cold war, with its immanent threat of nuclear conflagration. In the view of the hawks, the Soviet Union was an innately hostile power, and the keys to peace were strength, toughness, and deterrence. In the view of the doves, the Soviets were motivated as much by fear as we were, and the key to peace was mutual reassurance.

The remarkable denouement of the cold war vindicated the hawks. First, the cold war began to wind down during the administration of Ronald Reagan, the most hawkish of all U.S. Presidents, and its last remnants were liquidated under Reagan's heir, George Bush. Second, the hawks' interpretation of Soviet behavior during the cold war was endorsed by the intellectual and political leaders who emerged from "under the rubble" of the Soviet Union. Third, as the cold war wound down, several local conflicts—in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Namibia, and South Africa—were resolved, thus confounding the doves who had chastised the hawks for overestimating the cold-war dimensions of these conflicts.

History—which does not consist of controlled experiments—rarely yields so clear a resolution to an argument. In a better world, many doves would have come forward, if not in self-criticism, then to acknowledge their error and explore its sources. The economist Robert Heilbroner, a sympathizer with socialism, candidly assessed the implications of the Soviet collapse for his discipline, when he wrote in the *New Yorker*: "The contest between capitalism and socialism is over: capitalism has won." But in the field of foreign policy, precious few such voices have been heard.*

On the contrary, the silence of the doves has been broken most often by defiant self-justification. Strobe Talbott, now Deputy Secretary of State, wrote in the January 1, 1990 issue of *Time*,

for which he then worked, and which in that same issue pronounced Mikhail Gorbachev "man of the decade": "A new consensus is emerging, that the Soviet threat is not what it used to be. The real point, however, is that it never was. The doves in the Great Debate of the past 40 years were right all along." But why celebrate Gorbachev if he expressed nothing more than the historic essence of Soviet policy—if he was, so to speak, no different from Stalin and Brezhnev and all the rest?

Talbott explained that the collapse of the Soviet empire "revealed a brittleness in the entire Communist system. . . . That brittleness has been there all along, but it was often mistaken for toughness." For the scores of millions whose lives had been snuffed out by Communism, however, this news would have provided cold comfort. And it was hard to see why a system that had conquered one-third of the planet and taken such a fearful, indeed unparalleled, toll should be regarded as less menacing if it was impelled by "brittleness" rather than "toughness" or some other underlying dynamic.

In a parallel effort by self-justifying doves, the political scientists Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry wrote in *Foreign Policy* that it was "Ronald Reagan's personal anti-nuclearism, rather than his administration's hard line" that brought about an end to the cold war. Although admirably inventive, this interpretation neglected the fact that Reagan's "personal anti-nuclearism" did not translate into any concessions either in the building of weapons or in arms control, and that his policies in these areas were roundly excoriated by anti-nuclear activists (and by Soviet spokesmen).

Yet another dove, George F. Kennan, chimed in that claims of vindication by hawks were "intrinsically silly" because the more U.S. policies had followed a hard line, "the greater was the tendency in Moscow to tighten the controls by

* More cold-war post-mortems have been written by hawks, some triumphalist, others self-critical for their failure to anticipate the Soviet collapse. Such self-criticism is perhaps easier for those who were right on the main issue. See, for example, Owen Harries in COMMENTARY ("The Cold War & the Intellectuals," October 1991) and the special issue of the *National Interest* entitled "The Strange Death of Soviet Communism" (Spring 1993).

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both party and police, and the greater the braking effect on all liberalizing tendencies in the regime." This sounded plausible, but the record showed exactly the opposite. Of the four decades of the cold war, the 1970's, when first Richard Nixon and then Jimmy Carter pursued détente, were the least hard-line. But it was during this very period that the Soviets undertook their greatest arms build-up and their boldest imperial adventures, while imposing at home a significant degree of re-Stalinization. (Looking farther back, Soviet policies of conquest and repression in the late 1940's followed hot on the era of naive American pro-Sovietism which Kennan himself, then a hawk, tried to dispel in his famous "X" article.)

IT HAS for some time been clear that the doves would have to do a lot better than these early thrusts if they were to mount a coherent retrospective defense of their position. Now they may have found their champion in Raymond L. Garthoff, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former diplomat, State Department official, and SALT negotiator. Garthoff is, in other words, an epitome of the liberal foreign-policy establishment, and, accordingly, his newly published tome, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War*,* comes embellished with gushing jacket blurbs from the likes of McGeorge Bundy, Marshall Shulman, and the *Washington Post*'s Don Oberdorfer.

Although Garthoff's purpose is polemical, his method is historical. He depicts the cold-war protagonists as mirror-images of each other: "The fundamental underlying cause of the cold war was the belief in both the Soviet Union and the United States that confrontation was unavoidable, imposed by history." And again: "Each side tended to assume, and see, the worst motivation by the other, to justify its own actions and deny any justification to the other side, and to discount and disbelieve expressions of concern by the other."

In the 1980's, in Garthoff's account, the behavior of the two sides grew less symmetrical. The Soviets sought peace and comity, but the United States under Ronald Reagan sought only confrontation. As Garthoff puts it, while the "pursuit of arms limitations and reductions [was] given highest attention by the Soviet leaders . . . the active pursuit of regional geopolitical competition [was] given priority by the Reagan administration."

But it was not only Reagan's military programs that imperiled the peace, says Garthoff; it was his whole attitude. When Reagan met privately with the Soviet Foreign Minister in 1984, "Gromyko bridled at and rebutted Reagan's simplistic charge that the Soviet Union sought above all to destroy the capitalist system in the United States

and the West." Reagan's public pronouncements were even worse, especially when he called the Soviet Union an "evil empire" and the "focus of evil in the modern world." Garthoff chastises the former President for his "unawareness of the diplomatic impact of openly voicing" such sentiments. He also chides Reagan's Vice President, George Bush, for launching in 1983 "a tirade against Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe."

In general, this book seethes with an obsessive hatred of Ronald Reagan reminiscent of the animus toward Franklin Roosevelt once harbored by diehard Republicans. Garthoff's rage takes in Reagan's closest aides as well: "Some of his team, in particular Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, were unhappy even at a limited rapprochement and reduction of tensions" on the basis of "Soviet concessions." He even goes so far as to call Weinberger a liar for declaring that the invasion of Afghanistan demonstrated a "willingness to use military force to invade and coerce other countries." (In general, Garthoff believes, "The prevailing Western view was wrong . . . in believing that Communist ideology impelled Soviet leaders to expand their power.")

GIVEN these attitudes, it is no surprise that in every cold-war incident of the 1980's, Garthoff treats the Soviet side more sympathetically. Indeed, in recounting the Reagan administration's charges that the Soviet Union supported terrorism, violated arms-control agreements, or spread disinformation (such as the story that American security agencies had deliberately manufactured the AIDS virus), Garthoff waxes indignant not at the Soviet behavior in question but at the American government for making an issue of it and thereby roiling relations.

Similarly, when the Soviet downing of flight KAL 007 or the nuclear meltdown at Chernobyl resulted in a war of words, Soviet leaders, according to Garthoff, spoke falsely as a result of inadequate information, but American leaders lied maliciously in order to score propaganda points. ("The facts were not considered important; what was important was the opportunity to savage the Soviet leaders.") When the Soviets arrested and framed the American journalist Nicholas Daniloff, their action was an understandable response to the arrest of a Soviet UN employee in New York. (Never mind that the latter was engaged in espionage while Daniloff was not.) When the Soviets shot and killed Major Arthur Nicholson, the U.S. military liaison officer in East Germany, this was a "tragic incident" in which the two sides' claims were equally plausible. (Never mind that if Nicholson was in a restricted area, he could have been arrested rather than shot.) When the Soviets boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, it

* Brookings Institution, 834 pp., \$44.95.

was because they genuinely feared that America would not assure the safety of their athletes. And when the Soviets walked out of the strategic-arms talks, it was because Reagan had turned these into a "charade."

Garthoff's image of a Soviet Union haplessly seeking peace only to be rebuffed again and again by a confrontational American administration reaches back beyond Gorbachev to Brezhnev and the first days of Reagan's presidency. As early as January 1981, the Soviet ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin, asked plaintively, "Can't we work out our differences?" When this and similar entreaties fell on deaf ears, Brezhnev was at a loss about how to proceed. Garthoff writes:

The Soviet leaders had no alternative or "fall-back" to their advocacy of détente. They kept hoping that American leaders would eventually recognize that there was no viable alternative to peaceful coexistence and no advantage from confrontation. Hence they continued to wait for signs of a belated recognition of this fact of life by the Reagan administration too.

Brezhnev was succeeded by Andropov, who also wanted peace, but he, too, hit a brick wall. Washington's propagandistic reaction to the tragic downing of KAL 007 proved to be the proverbial straw that impelled a "change from Andropov's own earlier position on giving a little more time for the American administration to come around to a recognition of realities." After Andropov came Chernenko, another seeker of peace. He even, Garthoff tells us, issued "guidance on drafting the [1984 party] program [that] made clear that the prediction of the impending collapse of capitalism and triumph of Communism . . . would be deleted." But again no response from Washington.

How, then, was the cold war brought to an end? Garthoff's answer, of course, is Gorbachev. But Garthoff sees Gorbachev's policy much as Strobe Talbott does—not as a reversal of traditional Soviet policy, but as a distillation of its longstanding essence. In Garthoff's formulation, Gorbachev "recognize[d] that reciprocal political accommodation, rather than military power for deterrence or 'counterdeterrence,' was the defining core of the Soviet Union's relationship with the rest of the world."

When Gorbachev began to act on this realization, however, Reagan presented an obstacle. His hard-line policies, Garthoff insists, "made Soviet movement toward accommodation more difficult rather than more likely. Reagan's line gave ammunition to Soviet hard-liners, not those seeking compromises." Undaunted, "Gorbachev pressed ahead with his unilateral actions and concessionary negotiations not owing to the Reagan hard line and military build-up, but despite it."

Even though Reagan had by now slightly soft-

ened his original position, he still gave Gorbachev a hard time:

He criticized the Soviet Union and called for it to change many practices not only around the world . . . but at home as well. As Gorbachev began to make more and more changes in these practices, . . . Reagan did not reciprocate but asked for more.

As a result,

Progress in relations came only in areas and to the extent that the Soviet side was prepared to accept U.S. positions. The rapprochement that developed from 1985 through 1988 stemmed from the fact that Gorbachev had been prepared to change Soviet positions and accept American ones.

Lest anyone conclude from this that Reagan's policies worked, Garthoff again assures us that the Soviet leaders only made concessions they wanted to make and "did not simply cave in to meet tough American positions."

Now it is certainly true that the Kremlin made the lion's share of concessions. But it is also true that this was the only way the cold war could end—and for a simple reason that doves like Garthoff have spent their careers denying: the cold war was not a two-way street, but rather a function of Soviet policies. America had come out of World War II hoping to maintain its friendly relations with the USSR; but Moscow subjugated Eastern Europe and probed further, provoking a defensive response from the United States. Therefore the cold war was always Moscow's to call off. The moment the Kremlin called it off, it was over, except for the technical details which took a couple of years to work out.

BECAUSE America's goals in the cold war were defensive, so was its strategy. "Containment" aimed not to defeat the Soviets or match them tit for tat, but to wait them out. This, however, changed in the 1980's under Reagan, and a new book, by an author whose sympathies lie on the hawkish side of the debate, makes the case that it changed more than most people think.

In *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy that Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union*,* Peter Schweizer purports to offer "an account of a secret offensive on economic, geostrategic, and psychological fronts designed to roll back and weaken Soviet power." This "covert, strategic offensive against the Soviet Union," Schweizer claims, was launched in the first days of the Reagan administration under the leadership of CIA Director William Casey.

Schweizer quotes Casey as saying at the beginning of the Reagan years, "If we play our cards right [the Soviet economy is] going to implode."

* Atlantic Monthly Press, 284 pp., \$22.00.

Since the USSR depended on oil exports for hard currency, Casey (according to Schweizer) talked Saudi Arabia into driving down the price of oil, and thereby "a stake was driven silently through the heart of the Soviet economy."

The Soviet economy was also squeezed by the American rearmament program, tighter restrictions on the export of American technologies, and "a secret disinformation program" which slipped faulty blueprints to Soviet technology acquirers. In addition, says Schweizer, the CIA propped up Solidarity in Poland and dissidents elsewhere in Eastern Europe, and it aided the Afghan *mujahideen* not only with weapons but even in staging cross-border raids into the Asian republics of the Soviet Union.

Schweizer's work is so sloppy, however, that it is impossible to tell how much of this account can be trusted. His book has no index, no table of contents, no chapter titles; this, together with its breathless tone, gives it the feel of an adventure novel. It does have footnotes, but these often contain no information (a typical citation is "U.S. official, interview with the author"). What these notes do make clear is that Schweizer relied almost entirely on interviews, to the exclusion of documentary sources. Yet he shows little appreciation of the pitfalls of this method, such as the temptation of sources to embellish or to offer self-serving accounts, the lack of constraints on interviewees who insist on anonymity, and the distortions that arise from being able to interview some participants but not others.

Thus, several former National Security Council officials come off in Schweizer's account as having had larger roles in Reagan's anti-Soviet strategy than other commentators have attributed to them. These also appear to be individuals who gave Schweizer extensive interviews. On the other hand, some officials who are known to have played important roles are omitted.

A case in point is Schweizer's description of the National Security Planning Group, which he characterizes as "the body of real foreign-policy power" in the Reagan administration, the nerve center of the anti-Soviet campaign. He says it consisted of six members: the President, the Vice President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, the National Security Adviser, and the Director of Central Intelligence. But there was a seventh member, UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. In omitting her, Schweizer was either the victim of one of Kirkpatrick's enemies, or of an ill-informed source. Whatever the cause, Kirkpatrick has been airbrushed from the picture.

Schweizer is unconvincing in his suggestion that there was a Reagan master plan to bring down the Soviet Union. But still he is on to an important truth. The Reagan administration was out to make the cold war into more of a two-way street. Reagan, Casey, Kirkpatrick, Weinberger,

Richard Perle, and others were tired of playing only defense. They sought ways to strike back, most fundamentally by means of the "Reagan Doctrine" which aimed for the first time to put Communist turf at risk, instead of limiting the contest to areas that Communists had not yet conquered.

SCHWEIZER complains that "current historiography has given Mikhail Gorbachev the lion's share of the credit for the dawning of the post-cold-war era, . . . giving the vanquished more credit than the victor." But to counterpose Gorbachev to Reagan in this respect is to draw an unnecessary dichotomy. Both men deserve copious credit for the astonishing conclusion to the cold war. It was Gorbachev, and none other, who canceled the cold war. It was Reagan who generated the pressures that led Gorbachev to do it.

Gorbachev did not intend the ultimate effects he caused, especially not the dissolution of the USSR, but he embarked on a path of drastic reform, and like so many other revolutionaries before him, he became radicalized as he went along. Many post-mortems of the Soviet Union have attributed its death to the illness of its economy. Such an analysis is implicit in Schweizer's book, which places economic warfare at the center. But the truth is that even though the Soviet Union could not provide a good life for its subjects, it was far from collapsing economically.

By the time Gorbachev took power, economic growth had slowed to a near halt. But so what? The Soviet military still commanded more destructive power, both nuclear and conventional, than any other on earth. Perhaps the USSR would not have been able to keep up a high-tech arms race with America indefinitely (assuming, implausibly, that America itself would keep up such a race), but for the foreseeable future, its power was secure. Within the Soviet Union, consumers might be unhappy and a few brave dissidents might publish *samizdat*, but the rule of the Communist party faced no challenge whatsoever. Within the party, Gorbachev was firmly in control, even to the point where the party oligarchs, as Charles Fairbanks puts it, drank the Jonestown Kool-Aid he eventually proffered them.

By all indications, Gorbachev could have ruled unchallenged for the rest of his natural life; he and his cohorts could have continued to enjoy all the luxuries to which the Soviet elite was accustomed, however empty the shops; and they would have presided over a state that, at worst, would have remained one of the world's two superpowers. None of this was in jeopardy when Gorbachev launched the fateful course that brought the whole edifice down.

It is revealing that Gorbachev's main antagonist, Boris Yeltsin himself, takes precisely this view

of the matter. In a recent issue of the *New York Review*, David Remnick quotes the following remarkable passage from Yeltsin's first autobiography, *Against the Grain*:

[Gorbachev] could have gone on just as Brezhnev and Chernenko did before him. I estimate that the country's natural resources and the people's patience would have outlasted his lifetime, long enough for him to have lived the well-fed and happy life of the leader of a totalitarian state. He could have draped himself with orders and medals; the people would have hymned him in verse and song, which is always enjoyable. Yet Gorbachev chose to go another way.

Economic determinism will not suffice to explain this choice. We must endeavor to reconstruct what Gorbachev and his colleagues were thinking.

In spite of the fact that the deteriorating state of the Soviet economy was not a threat to the standard of living or the power of the Soviet oligarchs, it obviously bothered them. Not because their subjects had to stand in interminable queues—these people were not famous for their compassion—but because as ambitious men they did not want to preside over a sinking ship, even one sinking slowly, or one ready for mothballs. They wanted to feel themselves to be captains of a successful venture. (Recall how boastful their public discourse always was.) Hence, by exacerbating their economic predicament—by restricting technology transfers, reducing their hard-currency earnings, and pressuring them in the arms race—Reagan contributed to their malaise.

But he did more than that. If it is true that the economic factor worked not by directly constraining Soviet power but by making the elite feel dissatisfied, these feelings required a context. If the United States had continued, as in the late 70's, to exude pessimism and weakness; if additional countries had continued to fall under Communist rule; if, as the Soviets used to say then, the "correlation of forces" had continued to tilt in their direction, then the slowing of economic growth in the USSR need not have been too discouraging to its rulers.

But Reagan led a revival of American spirit. He restored military strength and diplomatic assertiveness, he spoke eloquently about freedom and democracy, and he challenged Communism rhetorically as no recent President had done, dismissing it as "a sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages are even now being written." This supplied the painful context in which Soviet leaders had to read the bad news about their economy.

THIS was also the context in which Gorbachev was chosen General Secretary in 1985. The Politburo members surely did not know what he was going to do (or they would not

have chosen him), but Gorbachev was the candidate of change, or at least dynamism, while his rivals, Grishin and Romanov, were seen as more conservative.

In struggling, with growing desperation, to get his country moving again, Gorbachev opted for the path of reform, and until he grew too radical, most of his Politburo colleagues apparently concurred. But reform was not the only conceivable approach to surmounting their economic difficulties. An alternative would have been to exploit their military might. They could have sought to appropriate new resources by conquest, either direct or through proxies, in places like the Middle East and South Africa. Or they might have aimed to extort a new inflow of credits, technology, investment, and other benefits from the wealthy countries of Europe, Asia, and the Persian Gulf.

The Soviet economy had long battered on such benefits, won by playing on greed, fear, and illusions. Now that these supplier countries were richer than ever and the Soviet military mightier, perhaps a big increase could have been engineered. Soviet leaders might well have been tempted to try such an approach had the West continued to demonstrate weakness. But Reagan's vigorous defense and foreign policies made this option unattractive.

Reagan's challenge to Soviet political legitimacy may also have affected Gorbachev. It remains unclear why Gorbachev unleashed glasnost as well as perestroika—that is, political reform as well as economic. Several analysts have asserted that economic change required political change, but why? After all, things did not work that way in Communist China.

A more compelling explanation is that Gorbachev believed, or came to believe, that the country's economic woes were only a symptom of a larger problem, that Soviet society was somehow off-track. In his 1987 book, *Perestroika*, Gorbachev said that even before coming to power he was convinced that "everything pertaining to the economy, culture, democracy, foreign policy—all spheres—had to be reappraised." And he added: "We know today that we would have been able to avoid many . . . difficulties if the democratic process had developed normally in our country." When he wrote those words, Gorbachev still thought of himself as a convinced Leninist. But within a few years, he abolished the Communist party's monopoly of power, thus eradicating Lenin's main legacy.

As Gorbachev evolved, it is hard to imagine that he was not influenced by Reagan's panegyrics on freedom and democracy and attacks on tyranny and totalitarianism (much as Raymond Garthoff was offended by them). We know in fact that Soviet leaders much less supple than Gorbachev were extremely sensitive to ideological

pronouncements of American leaders. For example, Brezhnev was so incensed at Jimmy Carter's early gestures regarding human rights in the USSR that Carter soon fell silent on the subject. Reagan was a far more persistent and persuasive advocate, and Gorbachev a far more receptive audience.

DOES it matter how the cold war came to end, or who was right and who wrong? The answer is that it matters very much. The cold war was the most important sustained challenge in the history of American foreign policy, and therefore it is our richest source of lessons. We are already paying a heavy price for the failure of the doves to face up to these lessons.

When Jimmy Carter was elected, the doves got their chance, and their policies resulted in utter failure. This led to the triumph in 1980 of Ronald Reagan, whose opposite policies were crowned with success. With the cold war laid to rest, Bill Clinton won election as a "new Democrat," the meaning of which, in foreign-policy terms, was hazy, although it seemed to suggest "not a dove." Though Clinton's top foreign-policy advisers had served in the Carter administration and shared responsibility for its failures, during the campaign they were quick to point out that the world had changed and they hinted that they, too, had changed.

Nevertheless, Clinton's foreign policies bear so strong a family resemblance to Carter's that a

popular wisecrack now refers to "Jimmy Clinton." The old doves no longer have the coherent world view that they trumpeted in the early '70's, but the reflexes that developed from that view still seem to dictate their responses to current issues.

For example, where challenged by Communist regimes or their remnants—as in Serbia, China, and North Korea—Clinton's foreign policy responds with weakness and appeasement. Confronted by another messianic anti-American movement—Islamic fundamentalism—the Clintonites have set out to discover the "moderates" within it. In Haiti, the Clinton administration shows the same partiality for anti-American leftists that inspired Jeane Kirkpatrick in the late 1970's to write "Dictatorships and Double Standards."* At home, it has saddled the armed forces with a liberal social agenda and harsh budget cuts, and recently the State Department made a display of excoriating dubious international human-rights violations by, of all countries, the United States.†

In short, the doves who guide the Clinton ship of state seem to have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Since the world is less dangerous today than during the cold war, policies such as these arouse little alarm. But before long they are bound to help make the world more dangerous again.

* COMMENTARY, November 1979.

† See Midge Decter's "The State Department vs. America," beginning on p. 65 of this issue.—ED.

Politically-Correct Baseball

George Weigel

INNOCENT of the game's history, sociology, or metaphysics, I learned my baseball in the late 1950's the old-fashioned way: sitting beside my grandfather Weigel in the lower deck of Baltimore's cavernous old Memorial Stadium, in the days when the Orioles seemed to have taken out a 99-year lease on sixth place in the American League.

You did not have to buy tickets six months in advance, or cadge them from a friendly corporate public-affairs officer, in that simpler age. Nor were you likely to have your beer (or, in my case in 1959, your popcorn or your Coke) knocked over by some broker's portable-phone antenna. Creature comforts were not much prized, either. "The stadium," as everybody called it, had no "luxury boxes"; indeed, in the lower reserved section, and throughout the upper deck and bleachers, it had no seats, period—just wooden benches, against whose splinters we protected ourselves by buying an *Evening Sun* as a cushion on the way into the park.

In short, on those humid summer nights when Baltimore felt like a suburb of Calcutta you did not come to the stadium to be seen, or to be "entertained," or to sip white zinfandel in an air-conditioned cocoon, or to make a real-estate deal: you came for *baseball*. And under those happy conditions, my grandfather taught me (and, later, my brother) the game.

He was not a voluble man, my grandfather Weigel, and he remained wholly untutored in what H.L. Mencken would have called the "wizard pedagogy" of John Dewey and Teachers College, Columbia. But such was the efficacy of his instruction that, by the time we were eight or nine, my brother and I knew, in addition to the players and the rules, at least the rudiments of the pastime's inner architecture, its subtleties, stratagems, and surprises.

To take the most obvious, and most basic, example: we knew that the poor boobies who complained that "Nothing ever happens in baseball" simply did not know what they were talking about. For my grandfather had taught us, not only how to watch, but how to *see* what was going on. So we learned that there was more to pitching than

balls and strikes. There were endless variations of speeds and locations; there were some things you did with some batters and other pitch sequences you avoided like the plague; umpiring was, at best, an inexact science, and the ophthalmological quirks of individual arbiters had to be considered.

Then there was defense. For whatever their other (and manifold) failings, the Baltimore Orioles that Paul Richards began to build in the 1950's could use the leather. So I came to appreciate the skills and baseball intelligence of a string of astounding shortstops that ran in apostolic succession from Willy Miranda to Chico Carrasquel to Ron Hansen to Luis Aparicio; these were also the days when Brooks Robinson began to redefine the playing of third base.

And from all of this—the minute adjustments in the positioning of fielders; the footwork and timing around second base during a double play; the stretch at first (never done better than by "Diamond Jim" Gentile); the coordination between outfielders and infielders to cut down errant baserunners—I learned that, where the sadly uninstructed saw only inaction, there was, in fact, a hell of a lot going on.

My baseball education was furthered by other classic educational materials: the radio, the sports pages of the morning and evening *Sun*, boys' baseball novels, baseball cards (ten for a dime, with bubble gum, but without cash-resale value). But it is to the personal instruction of my grandfather that I owe the most. And, as I have found myself replicating his efforts with my own children, I have come to appreciate the impact of his tutelage on my life more and more. For we learn baseball the way we learn religion: through stories, family traditions, and rituals. The refinements of doctrine, essential as they are, come later. First, we are converted.

This experience of an oral tradition—the narrative dimension of the game, which transcends and in fact creates the context for the true fan's other mania, namely, statistics—explains a lot of the grip that baseball has had on the national psyche for over 125 years. The recreation of personalities, situations, plays, entire games, or, for that matter, entire seasons; the endless arguing about "what if"; the ongoing comparison of feats ancient and modern; the yarning, the embellish-

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ing, even the wild exaggerating: in all of this story-making and story-telling, we are engaging in a national conversation that crosses the lines of class, race, age, and ideology like no other in our culture. I can happily talk baseball with people I find otherwise obnoxious, and with whom I agree on virtually nothing else; my teenage daughter can now hold her own in friendly arguments at the ballpark with perfect strangers four times her age. The video revolution has ruined vast areas of our culture. But as long as there is baseball, millions of Americans will know how to tell a story.

Baseball-as-oral-tradition also helps explain why there has never been a great baseball movie. William Bendix as the Bambino in *The Babe Ruth Story* is a sad memory to be erased; William Bendix as a Marine who dies happy in *Guadalcanal Diary* because he has just heard on the radio that the Dodgers have won evokes something of the place that the game, and our personal loyalties within the game, hold in our lives.

GIVEN the breathtaking scope of his ambition, which was to propose nothing less than a comprehensive interpretation of post-Civil War America through the lens of a documentary history of baseball, I suspect that Ken Burns also intended to break this pattern of cinematic failure, and to turn out the best baseball film ever. Everything about *Baseball*, the nine-part (or “inning,” as he calls it) Burns documentary that appeared for over eighteen hours on PBS in mid- and late-September, seems intended to evoke the label “epic”: its length, its pacing, its structuring of the story, the solemnity of the narration. And no one who loves the game will gainsay Burns’s genuine accomplishments.

As in his previous work on the Civil War, Burns displays, in *Baseball*, an uncanny ability to combine narrative and music with the slow scanning of a still photograph to make an individual or an event from the days before moving pictures come vibrantly alive. John J. McGraw, longtime manager of the New York Giants and one of the great figures of baseball’s golden age, is a case in point here.

Burns also uses old newsreel footage to great dramatic effect. In his fourth episode (chastely titled “A National Heirloom” on TV, but more aptly styled “That Big Son of a Bitch” in the film’s companion book*), I watched the Babe Ruth whom many had thought washed up in 1923 hit a home run on his first at-bat in the inaugural game at Yankee Stadium, and the proverbial chills ran down my spine. More subtly, Burns indulges a puckish sense of humor at times, as when Mozart’s overture to *Le Nozze di Figaro* provides the aural setting for a devastating narration of the wreckage wrought by “George III” Steinbrenner on the proud Yankee franchise.

But a tension, barely visible at the beginning yet increasingly evident over the course of its nine episodes, runs through *Baseball*—because, one

suspects, it runs through Ken Burns. And that is the tension between a baseball fan determined to produce an epic history of the pastime and a child of the 1960’s intent on driving home a certain interpretation of the American national experience of race (and, to a lesser extent, class). So as Burns’s nine-inning narrative unfolds, I found the baseball in *Baseball* increasingly and jarringly interrupted by the politics (which, not surprisingly, are entirely congruent with those we have come to expect from PBS).

The net result, alas, is not the epic that Burns wanted to create. *Baseball* has many magnificent moments. But the itch to admonish and to chastise (and in the nagging manner that makes up-market liberalism so . . . well, so *annoying*) proves irresistible. And it most particularly damages Burns’s telling of the pivotal tale in the drama, the story of Jackie Robinson. Thus, after eighteen hours, I found myself thinking of *Baseball*, not as an American epic, but as something more akin to a 7th-grade social-studies book from a progressive publisher, with lavish illustrations and a very politically-correct text.

BEFORE getting further into the unpleasantness, however, let us pause and be grateful for the things that Ken Burns and his colleagues get right.

Baseball wisely ignores the oceans of ink spilled over the pastime’s “pastoral” character, and quite rightly positions major-league baseball as a quintessentially urban phenomenon. Many of its players may have come from the farms and the mines, especially in the early days. But when we say “baseball,” we mean a city game whose most memorable moments have taken place, not in a massive concrete doughnut built alongside a freeway in the middle of nowhere, but in real ballparks whose architectural idiosyncracies were determined by the quirks of the street-grid in the city neighborhoods in which they were built.

But the “urban” quality of baseball has to do with the game itself, not simply with its surroundings. From the beginning, professional baseball has exhibited the character, distinctive to cities, of elegance and roughhouse combined in about equal proportions. The game mixes the athletic grace of a second-baseman “turning two” with the spike-sharpened aggression of a runner bent on breaking up the double play; within a single inning, a control pitcher’s mastery of the narrowest edges of the plate can be complemented by the mad abandon of a centerfielder climbing a seven-foot wall to snag a potential home run.

All of which, to my mind, says “city,” not “field of dreams.” And as *Baseball* reminds us, the professional game has always been surrounded (and threatened) by three oppidan behaviors—drinking, brawling, and gambling, the last of which

* *Baseball: An Illustrated History*, narrative by Geoffrey C. Ward, based on a documentary film script by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns. Knopf, 486 pp., \$60.00.

ruined the career and the reputation of one of the contemporary game's additions to the all-time pantheon, Pete Rose.

Ken Burns's film also rightly stresses, without falling into a dour Calvinism, that baseball is in large part about failure. A successful hitter fails seven times out of ten; a successful team loses 40 percent of its games. All of which teaches players, (real) fans, and managers (if not owners) a certain serenity. It is the kind of serenity that comes only on the far side of great passion, to be sure; but it is serenity, nonetheless.

Earl Weaver, the Orioles' manager during fifteen of the team's glory years between 1966 and 1983, used to tell nervous sportswriters, "Relax. This ain't football. We do this every day." Someone—was it Ray Miller, Weaver's pitching coach?—once said that you cannot play baseball with clenched teeth. The game is hard enough without tying yourself into a knot of anxiety, and baseball is a damned hard game to play well. And its hardness—its technical difficulty, and the unforgiving way in which it winnows wheat from chaff—is the truth at the heart of the failures that define the rhythm of games and seasons and give baseball its distinctive moral texture.

Thus no serious student of the pastime will quarrel with Burns's revisiting of such historic gaffes as "Merkle's Boner," "Snodgrass's Muff," Mickey Owen's dropped third strike in 1941, and Bill Buckner's tragic imitation of a croquet wicket in the sixth game of the 1986 World Series.

BUT the ubiquity of failure in baseball casts into greater relief the triumphs of the game's heroes, whose character and accomplishments Burns frequently captures with the deftness of a skilled miniature portraitist.

Among the best of his sketches of the pastime's greats—themselves an entire gallery of Americana—are those of Cap Anson, a magnificent player and manager and an unreconstructed racist who drew the "color line" in 1888; Christy Mathewson, the "Christian gentleman" from Bucknell who was a nonfiction Frank Merriwell; Honus Wagner, the Pittsburgh Pirates' "Flying Dutchman," a gentle giant who some still swear was the greatest player ever; Ty Cobb, "possessed by the furies," the antithesis of Mathewson and Wagner; the aforementioned McGraw; Grover Cleveland Alexander, the gifted but alcoholic pitcher who saved the sixth game of the 1926 World Series despite a massive hangover; Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig; Carl Hubbell, master of the screwball, who struck out Ruth, Gehrig, Jimmie Foxx, Al Simmons, and Joe Cronin, *seriatim*, in the 1934 All-Star Game; the elegant Yankee Clipper, Joe DiMaggio; Willie, Mickey, and the Duke (Mays, Mantle, and Snider); Hank Greenberg, pride of the Tigers, who came within an ace of topping Ruth's single-season home-run record; Ted Williams, perhaps the greatest pure hitter ever; Stan "The Man" Musial; Carl Yastr-

zemski, who single-handedly drove the Red Sox to the 1967 American League pennant with what some believe was the greatest month a player ever had; Brooks and Frank Robinson, the heart and soul of the Oriole dynasty of the late 60's and early 70's; Sandy Koufax and Bob Gibson, flame-throwers both; Roberto Clemente, a magnificent athlete driven by demons of resentment; and Hank Aaron, the steady, undemonstrative slugger who broke Ruth's career home-run record.

Baseball also explores the passions, foibles, and genius of some of the off-the-field figures who bent the game to their wills: Albert G. Spalding, the Gilded Age magnate who fancied himself the equal of Vanderbilt, Carnegie, and Rockefeller and manipulated the game into building him the country's greatest sporting-goods empire; Ban Johnson, the autocratic founder of the American League; Kenesaw Mountain Landis, the commissioner who restored the pastime's integrity after the "Black Sox" fixed the 1919 World Series, but of whom Heywood Broun once wrote, "His career typifies the heights to which dramatic talent may carry a man in America if only he has the foresight not to go on the stage"; and Branch Rickey, whose distinctive combination of Methodist piety and a shrewd marketing eye led him to break Anson's "color line" by bringing Jackie Robinson to the Dodgers.

But it is the players, what was said of them, and what they said, that are of enduring interest, and Burns serves up a good-sized helping of the pastime's more memorable *bons mots*. Here we are made to recall the scouting report on Walter ("Big Train") Johnson: "He knows where he's throwing because if he didn't there would be dead bodies strewn all over Idaho." And Dizzy Dean's answer as to why he dropped out of the second grade: "I didn't do so well in the first grade, either." And the observations in epistemology vouchsafed by the Old Perfesser, Casey Stengel, and his star pupil (and prize player), Yogi Berra: "I made up my mind, but I made it up both ways"; "Baseball is 90-percent mental; the other half is physical."

Baseball also does a good service by introducing several generations of Americans to the Negro Leagues, to slugging catcher Josh Gibson, speedster James "Cool Papa" Bell, and pitcher-manager-entrepreneur Andrew "Rube" Foster, and to noble teams like the Homestead Grays, the Kansas City Monarchs, the Pittsburgh Crawfords, and the Baltimore Elite Giants. And Burns draws a handsome portrait of Satchel Paige, perhaps the only Negro League great whose name even the casual fan would recognize.

But the finest work in *Baseball*'s rendering of the Negro Leagues experience is done by John J. ("Buck") O'Neil, a former Monarchs first baseman and manager. O'Neil holds a position in *Baseball* similar to Shelby Foote's in Burns's ear-

lier film on the Civil War: the man whose stories and comments you always want more of.

O'Neil has, I think, precisely the right analysis of the Negro Leagues: they never should have happened, but, damn, they were great. The former judgment is, of course, the more frequently encountered these days. (In fact, it distorts the historical analysis in Burns's film, which by presenting black baseball essentially over against the dominant white world, treats it as a form of deprivation.) But Buck O'Neil refuses to have the meaning of his career forced onto any Procrustean bed of political correctness. "We loved it," is his summary comment on the not-always-easy life of segregated leagues and off-season barnstorming. "Why would you feel sorry for me? . . . We did our duty. We did the groundwork for the Jackie Robinsons, the Willie Mayses, and the guys that are playing now. So why feel sorry for me?" Why indeed?

Finally, *Baseball* reminds us of the game's remarkable capacity for self-regeneration. The corruptions of Gilded Age baseball led to the reformation of 1876, the establishment of the National League. When the Black Sox scandal threatened the game's future by trifling with its most precious asset—fan loyalty—Babe Ruth emerged as the people's choice. The decay of the sport during World War II was followed by a fifteen-year run of excellence that many consider without parallel in the game's history. The doldrums of fan apathy in the late 60's and early 70's ended at 12:33 A.M. on October 22, 1975, when Carlton Fisk's home run off the left-field foul-pole at Fenway Park ended the greatest World Series game ever played and launched a nationwide revival of interest in the pastime.

On the other hand, *Baseball* misses some important things. Burns seems little interested in pitching, and two of the most game-changing developments of recent decades—the invention of the slider and the split-fingered fastball, on the technical side, and the strategic emergence of the "closer," or late-inning relief specialist, as an essential weapon in any winning team's arsenal—simply go unremarked. Similarly—with the obvious exceptions of Willie Mays's catch off Vic Wertz in the 1954 World Series, and Brooks Robinson's grand larceny at third during the 1970 Series—great defense plays little role in Burns's baseball imagination.

The uninitiated will also learn little about the strategy of baseball from *Baseball*. This is a curious oversight (given the number of brilliant managers still living, and in some cases, working, who could have been interviewed) that risks confirming the complaint of the ignorant about "nothing happening" in those long moments between home runs.

Nor does *Baseball* tell us much about the minor leagues, a once-vast and flourishing network of professional teams now experiencing something of a renaissance after decades of troubles.

Burns's tight focus on New York and Boston gets him into trouble here. Thus we are not told that, for years, the Triple-A level Pacific Coast League (in which players of real ability spent entire careers and made serious money) prepared itself to become a third major league, only to have its thunder stolen when Walter O'Malley and Horace Stoneham moved the Dodgers and the Giants from New York to the Coast.

Students of the game will also wonder why, in eighteen hours of film, time could not have been found to note the careers of Buck Ewing, Ed Delahanty, Billy Sunday, Napoleon Lajoie, George Sisler, Bill Dickey, Charlie Gehringer, Harry Heilmann, and Lou Boudreau, among the old-timers. I also found it strange that a film as self-consciously comprehensive as *Baseball* ignores, among the contemporaries, Johnny Bench, arguably the greatest catcher ever; Mike Schmidt, no match for Brooks Robinson with the glove, but overall perhaps the best third baseman in history; George Brett, the finest bat of his time; Harmon Killebrew, who ranks fifth on the career home-run list; and Dan Quisenberry, Rollie Fingers, and Goose Gossage, three exceptional relievers. I would also like to have seen a little more about umpires, who, apart from a cameo appearance by the legendary Bill Klem, are notable for their absence from *Baseball*.

But these are, as they say, judgments calls: the kinds of things to be argued about, good-naturedly, during the off-season. The central flaw in *Baseball* lies deeper and is far more serious.

IRRITATING exercises in political correctness recur throughout Ken Burns's film. Stephen Jay Gould, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Studs Terkel, George Plimpton, Gerald Early (a Washington University professor of African-American Studies), and Mario Cuomo are all given ample opportunity to offer portside commentary on the game and its meaning for the country. But from starboard there is only George F. Will. Thus the standard PBS ratio of liberal to conservative commentators is maintained, and we are denied what would have been intriguing comments on baseball and America from such conservative aficionados of both as Donald Kagan, Leon R. Kass, Charles Krauthammer, and Hadley Arkes (author of one of the most spectacular of all historical mnemonics: "I can always remember when St. Augustine was born. It was 1,600 years before the Indians won their last pennant").

Worse, viewers of *Baseball* are subjected to a series of dull homilies from Governor Cuomo, all variations on his 1984 address to the Democratic Convention, on the inability of Americans to form "community": even as the film within which he is commenting constantly refutes his claim.

As a ballplayer, the young Cuomo never got out of the low minors. It would have been more interesting to hear from Representative Jim Bunning, a conservative Republican who won 216

major-league games as a pitcher for the Tigers, Phillies, Pirates, and Dodgers, or Senator Connie Mack, the Republican from Florida who is the grandson of one of the game's greatest figures. But that would have cut against the grain of the film's subtext, which is that a proper understanding of baseball's history leads, without much further analytic ado, to a politically-correct understanding of 20th-century American history.

Given that hermeneutic preoccupation, it should come no surprise that Burns's portrait of baseball's ugly labor history is one in which the owners are unremitting scoundrels and the players hard-beset wage slaves, until the dawn of free agency and the birth of the mega-contract.* I happen to think that there is considerable truth in the first half of that analysis: baseball's owners have, historically, and down to the present moment, shown incredible ineptness and stupidity in managing the pastime. But Burns fails to explore how the explosion of wealth in baseball has corrupted players as well as owners, for the former show as little interest in the integrity of the game today as do the latter.

Why, for example, did the players not make reform of the game itself part of their demands in this year's labor negotiations? Why did they not demand a say in reestablishing a commissioner with real authority to act "in the best interests of baseball"? Why, in brief, are they, too, so single-mindedly focused on the money?

These are not questions that fit easily into Burns's *gauchiste* understanding of labor-management relations in baseball and America. But answering them seems as urgent today as condemning the arrogant and irresponsible club owners who do not seem to understand that they do not "own baseball."

Then there are the throwaway lines in the script about "anti-Communist hysteria during the cold war"; the excessive attention lavished on Bill Lee, a flaky Red Sox pitcher who constantly appears in a "CCCP" (i.e., "USSR") baseball cap (would Burns have featured him approvingly if he wore a cap emblazoned with a swastika?); the bland description of the urban riots of the 60's—"American cities were set ablaze"—as if these were acts of God rather than acts of criminals; the morally offensive analogy between slavery and the old "reserve clause" (which, before free agency, bound a player to a team for his entire career); and the ritual bow to the 60's as "a decade dedicated to change." It is, however, in dealing with the central figure of his history that Ken Burns falls flattest.

FORTY-SEVEN years after he became the first black American to play major-league baseball in the 20th century, Jackie Robinson's legend remains untouched by the passion for deconstructing heroes that has corrupted the United States for two decades now. That, in my judgment, is precisely how it should be, because

the Robinson legend "rarely deviates from reality," as one historian of baseball's desegregation put it.

Branch Rickey did in fact pick Jackie Robinson to break the color line because he wanted a warrior with the courage not to lash back against the crude racial abuse he was certain to encounter. Robinson did in fact respond with some of the greatest baseball in history, while keeping his bargain with Rickey, his mouth shut, and his fists to himself. And things did in fact turn around—first on the Dodgers, and later throughout the sport—as a one-time institutional bastion of segregation became a crucial instrument in the social revolution that was the civil-rights movement in its classic period.

Moreover (and this is a point on which Burns is silent), after his baseball career ended and the ideological contours of race politics changed with the emergence of Black Power and black separatism, Robinson remained committed to the ideal he and Rickey shared. It was the ideal most memorably articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr., the ideal of an America in which men are judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skins. In the early 1970's, when Roger Kahn masterfully recreated the Dodgers' epic period in *The Boys of Summer*, Robinson came back into the public eye; he told Kahn that he had been getting letters again, "mostly from people who believe in the right things. Integration."

Those who have been understandably exhausted by the claims of continuing victimhood advanced in the name of racial quota systems and an ever-expanding welfare state (not to mention the lunacies of "Afrocentric" school curricula and the anti-Semitism of Louis Farrakhan) are precisely those who should applaud George Will's assertion that, while Dr. King was the most important black American in our history, Jackie Robinson was second—a "very close second." For Robinson did, just as the civil-rights anthem promised, overcome, and the plain truth of the matter is that he overcame a lot: a late start in the majors (he was twenty-eight when he first joined the Dodgers); initially hostile teammates; vicious verbal abuse from fans, and the same—plus spikings and beanings—from opposing players; and above all, the enormous pressure of being first, and having to do it exactly right.

But Jackie Robinson not only overcame, he prevailed. His exceptional athletic skills were combined with a ferocious competitiveness that made him, to many serious observers, the dominant player of his era (which was, be it remembered, the era of Mantle, Mays, and Williams). Leo Duro-

* Burns suggests that Curt Flood, the Cardinals' centerfielder who sued baseball in 1969 on 13th-Amendment (i.e., anti-slavery) grounds in an attempt to reconstruct the pastime's pre-free-agency labor practices, was a kind of proletarian martyr. In his last season with the Cardinals, 1969, Flood was paid \$90,000, which was \$81,742.40 more than the average auto mechanic, and \$83,162 more than the average secretary.

cher, who managed Robinson on the Dodgers and against him for the Giants, once said of him, "Ya want a guy that comes to play. This guy didn't just come to play. He come to beat ya. He come to shove the goddam bat right up your ass."

Because of that dramatic combination of will and ability, Jackie Robinson, the first African-American professional baseball player in the modern era, began, somehow, to transcend the conventional psychology of race even while remaining unmistakably, proudly, majestically *black*. As Roger Kahn put it: "Like a few, very few athletes, Babe Ruth, Jim Brown, Robinson did not merely play at center stage. He *was* center stage; and wherever he walked, center stage moved with him."

That Burns's *Baseball* comes nowhere near to capturing the enduring qualities of Jackie Robinson so well as Kahn's *The Boys of Summer* is, in part, a further demonstration of the written word's superiority to celluloid. But only in part. The rest has to do with Burns's political correctness.

Most egregiously, on the issue of race in America, Burns informs us that

By 1934, the world economy was in ruins and fascism was on the rise. In Germany, the National Socialists had come to power and had begun to institute exclusionary laws against Jews in an eerie echo of Jim Crow statutes in the United States.

The implication would seem to be that Reinhard Heydrich, Heinrich Himmler, and Adolf Eichmann, sitting around the conference table at Wannsee a few years later, were merely emulating the racial views of Cap Anson, Ty Cobb, and Kenesaw Mountain Landis: a grotesque diminution of the ideological horror and singular evil of the Holocaust, and an enormous slur on the moral character of the United States. (It is also a reversal of history: it was German eugenic theory that tended to inform American racial laws in the 1920's and 1930's, and not the other way around.)

A filmmaker who apparently thinks that Satchel Paige labored for the Kansas City Monarchs under the moral equivalent of the Nuremberg Laws is not a filmmaker, much less a historian, who is likely to do full justice to the Jackie Robinson story: what it meant for baseball, what it meant about America then, and what it could mean for an America in which racism, white and black, remains a social evil.

But that is not the worst of it. For to suggest that Jackie Robinson, a lieutenant in the United States Army during the war in which that army defeated Hitler, was in reality the victim of a Nazi-like ideology, is to suggest that Jackie Robinson, an authentic America hero, was a fool.

ON JULY 19, 1994, a game between the Seattle Mariners and the Baltimore Orioles was canceled because tiles from the ceil-

ing of Seattle's Kingdome had crashed down into the box seats some hours before game time. It seemed, then, an apt metaphor for baseball's season of discontent: the pastime's ugliest venue, a monument to invincible ignorance about how the game should be played, turned on the game and made the playing of it impossible. As it happened, of course, metaphor became prophecy when, on September 14, the World Series was canceled—a perfidy beyond calculation, but not beyond the ken of today's owners and players.

No one knows just how much damage this season's strike, and the cancellation of the World Series for the first time since 1904, has done to fan loyalty, which remains, even in a television era, the foundation of the game's economic stability. But even were its economics and labor-management relations in order (and the latter is, arguably, an eschatological concept), baseball would still be in need of serious reform. For the major-league game has been corrupted over the last twenty years, on the field and in the stands, in ways that threaten baseball's continuity with its past.

Nobody much cares whether the National Basketball Association today looks like the NBA of Bill Russell and Bob Cousy, since history is of little consequence in basketball. But if the baseball played today appears alien to the game as played by Ruth and DiMaggio, Willie Mays and Bob Gibson, then something close to the heart of the pastime—something that defines its singular place in our lives—will have been lost.

"Artificial grass" that turns infields into pool tables and domes whose ceilings hide fly balls; umpires who have unilaterally shrunk the strike zone; the mindless and greed-driven expansion of the major leagues, which has severely weakened the talent pool (especially among pitchers) and threatens to create a raft of inflated batting records; a post-season playoff scheme that violates one of baseball's ancient moral norms by rewarding failure—all of these recent "innovations" imperil the integrity of the pastime. So, too, does the glitzy mix of sex-rock-'n'-jocks which many owners seem determined to inflict on ballparks in slavish imitation of the NBA. And on this question of ambience, which risks the transformation of baseball into but one more "entertainment option," the players, who have lifted nary a finger to reform the game that is so much theirs, are also silent.

"You can't kill it," says Buck O'Neil toward the end of *Baseball*: a confession of faith in the pastime's future which I would like to share. But one thing major-league baseball teaches you is never to say "never" about major-league baseball. Those owners and players who think that the pastime is infinitely plastic in its capacity to accommodate their avarice, and who imagine that fans will remain loyal unto death under any circumstances of abuse, are betraying their stewardship—and risking the wrath of heaven.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's Third Act

Joseph Epstein

... how I would hate the reputation of being clever at writing but stupid at everything else.
—Montaigne

MICHEL de Montaigne's dread has been F. Scott Fitzgerald's fate. As his reputation has filtered down through biography, memoirs of contemporaries, and posthumous publications of various sorts, Fitzgerald has been judged something like a lucky genius as a writer and an almost pure disaster as a man.

Officially, this unenviable reputation began with a remark by the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay which was picked up by Edmund Wilson, with whom Fitzgerald had gone to Princeton. In an essay of 1922, when Fitzgerald was himself only twenty-six and had just published his second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, Wilson, already an important critic, wrote:

It has been said by a celebrated person that to meet F. Scott Fitzgerald is to think of a stupid old woman with whom someone has left a diamond; she is extremely proud of the diamond and shows it to everyone who comes by, and everyone is surprised that such an ignorant old woman should possess so valuable a jewel; for in nothing does she appear so inept as in the remarks she makes about the diamond.

Wilson went on to say that Fitzgerald was a clever enough fellow, but, nonetheless, "there is a symbolic truth in the description quoted above."

After this essay, Fitzgerald's reputation as the artistic equivalent of an idiot savant was firmly locked in place, so that Glenway Westcott, a much inferior novelist, could later call him "the worst-educated man in the world" and the poet John Peale Bishop, another Princeton contemporary, could remark that Fitzgerald had "left Princeton without a degree and without much of an education." More recently, Gore Vidal referred to him as "barely literate."

But, then, residing comfortably alongside the notion of F. Scott Fitzgerald as ignorant genius there is also the cult of Fitzgerald, which set in not long after his death at the age of forty-four. In this cult he is viewed as a tragic young god—

tragic because much too soon dead. The spirit of the cult was nicely caught by the English critic Cyril Connolly, who in 1951, the year Arthur Mizener's biography of Fitzgerald, *The Far Side of Paradise*, appeared, wrote that "apart from his increasing stature as a writer, Fitzgerald is now firmly established as a myth, an American version of the Dying God, an Adonis of letters."

Dying young, leaving behind work unfinished and promise unfulfilled, Fitzgerald has become enshrined as a great failure. He had himself cultivated this reputation long before his death, beginning with the publication, in *Esquire*, of the essays that were posthumously collected by Wilson under the title of *The Crack-Up* (1945). Of the many differences between himself and his contemporary, Ernest Hemingway, Fitzgerald wrote in his notebook: "Ernest speaks with the authority of success. I speak with the authority of failure." But in literature and the arts, if nowhere else, the authority of failure sometimes proves the greater—so much so that one can sometimes say that here nothing quite succeeds like failure.

Which is not to say that Fitzgerald never enjoyed success in the usual sense. On an imaginary graph, how wavy a line his reputation has ridden over the years! It begins headed straight up with the best-seller success of his first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920); it dips slightly with *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922); hits its artistic height with *The Great Gatsby* (1925); shows an eight-year gap between the publication of *Gatsby* and Fitzgerald's last completed novel, *Tender Is the Night* (1933); and then drops sadly, with all his books out of print and no one asking for or expecting more, which is where things stood at his death of heart failure in his Hollywood apartment in 1940.

At that point, Fitzgerald was broke and broken—as a man out of luck and as an author out of print. He had lived long enough to see his one unequivocal artistic triumph, *The Great Gatsby*, dropped from the Modern Library because it was not selling. He left his final book, *The Last Tycoon*, for which he had done the most meticulous planning, so incomplete that its potential quality was (and remains) difficult to judge. As a screenwriter, he had been dealt all the little humiliations Hollywood had to hand out. He had not

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had enough money to travel East to visit his daughter Scottie for more than a year, or to see his schizophrenic wife, the notorious Zelda, who would die eight years after him in a fire in an insane asylum of which she was an inmate. Debt and family obligations kept him on the griddle of hack production for the last decade of his short life.

A FAMOUS Fitzgerald tag line has it that "there are no second acts in American lives." Fine though the ring to that line is, it is not true when applied to Fitzgerald himself, whose literary life has had a powerful and continuing posthumous second and third act, and may even be in for an epilogue or two. For after his death there followed a slow rise in Fitzgerald's reputation, beginning with the publication of *The Crack-Up*, the return of all his books to print, the installation of the young-Adonis myth, and a steady flow of biographies and collections of letters.

True, there was the damage done in 1964 by the rivalrous Hemingway, who in his memoir, *The Moveable Feast*, portrayed Fitzgerald as a weak, sexually insecure, hopeless drunk. But this was more than offset by the steady rise in his literary stock, combined with heavy academic attention. "Academic" may be imprecise, for *The Great Gatsby* is one of those books that most children are asked to read in high school and even in grammar school, and for all one knows by now in Montessori preschools. Along with *Huckleberry Finn*, it is one of the few books that is a common literary possession of middle-class American children in a less and less literary age. Teachers continue to milk it, often finding fresh and wonderful things, as does Ronald Berman in *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times*,* who has recently discovered that the novel brilliantly foreshadows life in a mass society.

Yet even about *The Great Gatsby* there clings something of the quality of luck, of the one-shot deal, as if Beethoven had written the *Eroica* Symphony and otherwise only mildly interesting, largely botched, incidental music. How could this foolish, if not frivolous, young man, F. Scott Fitzgerald, ill-educated and not yet thirty, bring off so nearly perfect a book?

American literature has known other one-great-book authors—Mark Twain in some ways qualifies, and so, in others, does Melville—but none has quite the airy quality of Fitzgerald, who wrote two very boyish early novels that no one would bother reading today if their author had not also written *Gatsby*; a rich but perhaps overcooked fourth novel, *Tender Is the Night*; a handful of winning short stories; and an uncompleted final novel. Sometimes it seems as if Fitzgerald, in writing *The Great Gatsby*, had hit the lottery.

Especially does this seem the case when one totes up Fitzgerald's personal deficiencies. Rau-

cous, often pathetic drunkenness is high on that list. Churchill once said that he always got the best of alcohol and alcohol never got the best of him. Not so Fitzgerald, who may have been an alcoholic as early as his college years. The Fitzgeralds, Scott and Zelda, were to drinking what Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers were to dancing: the top, the colosseum, the Louvre museum, and so forth.

The Fitzgeralds achieved fame for jumping into the Pulitzer fountain near the Plaza hotel in New York, which sounds relatively harmless and even came to symbolize the good times of the 1920's, the so-called Jazz Age. But while drunk, the Fitzgeralds' idea of amusing behavior was to collect everyone's watch and jewelry and boil them in a can over the stove; or to call out the fire department—upon the arrival of which Zelda, pointing to her left breast, would claim that that the fire was in her heart; or to destroy apartments, their own and other people's; or to insult servants, friends, and anyone else in sight, with Scott often ending an evening by getting into a fist fight, which he would inevitably lose. Not quite, the Fitzgeralds, what we should today call a "fun couple."

If Fitzgerald could not control his alcohol, he was not much better with money. Although he earned vast sums, money seemed to slip away from him like genial groups from a confident bore. He earned as much as \$4,000 a shot for the many short stories he published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in the 1920's, a fee that would be roughly the equivalent of \$40,000 in 1994. But this was sloshed away in boozy, sloppy living. In the mid-30's, he was getting at first \$1,000, then \$1,250 a week writing for the movies. But this went to pay off old debts and private-school bills for his daughter and private-sanatorium bills for Zelda. Public institutions, he judged, were not good enough for either.

Poor Fitzgerald, the man thought to be the great chronicler of the American rich—"Let me tell you about the very rich," he wrote in a famous short story, "They are different from you and me"—was never able to accumulate enough to provide himself with the time to write the serious books he was certain were in him. Like the solid reputation as an artist he so ardently desired, money, too, always eluded him.

As Fitzgerald would have been the first to tell you, he botched it, and botched it badly. So do many of us, but what makes Fitzgerald's case poignant is, first, he really had something to botch; and, second, he was acutely, painfully aware of all that he had thrown away. To his daughter Scottie, to whom in her adolescence he regularly dispensed advice, he wrote in one of his last letters:

What little I've accomplished has been by the most laborious and uphill work, and I wish now

*University of Illinois Press, 208 pp., \$24.95.

that I'd *never* relaxed or looked back—but said at the end of *The Great Gatsby*: "I've found my line—from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty—without this I am nothing."

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD was a contemporary not only of Ernest Hemingway but of William Faulkner, who was probably the most complete and dedicated artist of the three. Faulkner's artistry has long been recognized, yet while he is established as an academic subject, people seem to read him less and less for pleasure. Hemingway's novels now seem slightly ridiculous, the ideas at their center hollow if not sentimental (Fitzgerald himself called *For Whom the Bell Tolls* "a thoroughly superficial book with all the profundity of *Rebecca*"), and it is mainly his short stories, which achieve the magical status of poetry, that today hold the attention of serious readers.

Faulkner and Hemingway each won the Nobel Prize, but Fitzgerald has probably had the greater influence on the general culture of America. More clear than the precise nature of this influence is its pervasiveness: the designer Ralph Lauren, with his fantasies of 1920's elegance, hardly seems possible without the precedent of Fitzgerald's novels. The (fictitious) novelist, Richard Caramel, a character in Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*, remarks that "Everybody in the next generation will be named Peter or Barbara—because at present all the piquant characters are named Peter or Barbara." He then adds: "And then I'll come along and pick up the obsolete name, Jewel, I'll attach it to some quaint and attractive character and it'll start its career all over again." Here is art as minor prophesy: consider all the young women named Nicole—after Nicole Diver in *Tender Is the Night*—currently in the world. Consider, too, all the boys named Scott, including the Scott Schwartzs, Feldmans, and Goldsteins. The writing of F. Scott Fitzgerald has always excited a yearning for elegance, perhaps because Fitzgerald himself so yearned for it.

Although Fitzgerald never graduated from Princeton—he did very badly there, and, technically, dropped out—his is the name more strongly associated with the school than any other, even that of Woodrow Wilson, once its president. Whereas the Princeton he entered was considered lazy and aristocratic, its characteristic note one of indolent elegance, its reputation that of "the pleasantest country club in America," after and because of Fitzgerald it has been thought of as literary and exclusive and in the snobbery sweepstakes an even better buy than Yale or Harvard. While he did not strike his contemporaries at Princeton as a powerful personality—"Fitzgerald," John Peale Bishop wrote about him, "was pert and fresh and blond, and looked, as someone said, like a jonquil"—the impression he

has made on posterity continues to be enormous.

When the young *Paris Review* crowd—George Plimpton, William Styron & Co.—went off to Paris in the 1950's, they did so in emulation of Fitzgerald as much as of any other writer. They were not alone in this. When I was an undergraduate at the University of Chicago in the 1950's, there was an entire fraternity—Beta Theta Pi—that seemed to be living on an F. Scott Fitzgerald script of stylish partying and heavy drinking. One of its members had published a story in *New World Writing*, an impressive accomplishment for a boy not yet twenty, and I remember him, drunk in his room, telling me before passing out that he could imagine the floor covered wall to wall with martinis and Anchor Books (the most elegant of highbrow paperbacks of the time). The performance was pure Fitzgerald.

Such extra-literary adoration—the Fitzgerald phenomenon—has complicated a clear view of Fitzgerald's talent. Perhaps no other American writer has so trickily presented the problem of separating the work from the life. Cyril Connolly, who as a reviewer wrote a great deal about him, concluded that "Fitzgerald is overrated as a writer, that his importance, apart from *Gatsby* and a few stories, lies in his personality as the epitome of a historical moment." Yet that historical moment seems to live on and with an interest that is more than historical. Books about, books studying, and books recalling Fitzgerald continue to appear. Can it be that there is something about him that transcends both his writing and his life—something centrally human that sustains our fascination?

IN HIS recent collection of Fitzgerald's letters,* Matthew J. Bruccoli maintains that "the dominant influences on F. Scott Fitzgerald were aspiration, literature, Princeton, Zelda Fitzgerald, and alcohol." If those were the influences, Fitzgerald's real *subjects* were ambition, snobbery, loss, and self-pity—the subjects both of his books and of his life. His depths, as Fitzgerald's own protagonist, Dick Diver, says of the young movie actress Rosemary Hoyt in *Tender Is the Night*, were "Irish and romantic and illogical." Fitzgerald was not least Irish in his concern with social status; from Henry James through John O'Hara, the Irish, once much contemned in American life, were sensitively attuned to the horrors of snobbery and stimulated by the delights of social attainment.

In good part, behind the continuing attraction of Fitzgerald is his style, his lush, lovely style, style to the highest power, which is style not merely as pretty writing—though Fitzgerald was able to produce vast quantities of that—but as an attractive way of viewing the world. Style of this power, style

* *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters*. Scribners, 503 pp., \$30.00.

this pervasive, is otherwise known as charm. Raymond Chandler, who thought Fitzgerald "just missed /being a great writer," maintained that charm was the quality Fitzgerald had in superabundance—charm, he added, as Keats would have used the word: "a kind of subdued magic, controlled and exquisite, the sort of thing you get from good string quartets."

What made Fitzgerald a considerable artist was that he was able to get this charm into his writing—much more into his writing, one gathers, than into his life, which at times could have served as a reverse Dale Carnegie course. But if he was himself a living, breathing version of *How Not to Win Friends and Influence People*, in even the least of his stories one finds the magic, the fine touches, that seem to heighten life's possibilities.

The Fitzgerald charm does not disarm everyone. It has distinctly not disarmed Jeffrey Meyers, Fitzgerald's newest biographer.* Meyers, though an academic by paycheck, is by vocation a professional biographer who works in a manner with which I am in great sympathy. He writes biographies that do not seek to be definitive but instead to revitalize the discussion about particular 20th-century writers. He tends to be more interested in the life of a writer than in his work—or, perhaps more precisely, in relating the life to the work. He produces books of fewer than 400 pages—rare in contemporary literary biography—does not spend a decade or more on a book, and never pauses long enough between books to set up shop as a the great expert on a single writer, in the manner of the late Richard Ellmann (James Joyce) or Leon Edel (Henry James). One assumes that he writes a book because an author has, at one time or another, actively engaged his passions as a reader.

F. Scott Fitzgerald is hardly a fresh subject. At least six full-blown biographies have preceded Meyers's, not to mention many critical studies and a biography of Zelda. The Fitzgerald turf has been pretty well worked, which means that the time for revisionism has arrived. When literary ground has been thoroughly plowed, someone is sure to come along and attempt to blow it up. This, in part, is what Meyers has done.

MEYERS's is not an entirely destructive work. No previous biographer, for example, has shown how heavily Fitzgerald drew upon aesthetic notions learned from Joseph Conrad. Meyers is excellent on the partly rivalrous, partly, one has to say, sadomasochistic relationship with Hemingway. By way of original research, he has tracked down a late-life love of Fitzgerald's named Bijou O'Connor.

Meyers's biography also comes, to return to my agronomic metaphors, after much spade work has been done by others, and so he is in a position to clear up matters of controversy. One such

has to do with a story told by Hemingway in *A Moveable Feast*. According to Hemingway, Fitzgerald once approached him to ask whether he thought his, Fitzgerald's, member was too small to give Zelda satisfaction; Hemingway thereupon took Fitzgerald into the men's room for an inspection, pronounced nothing wrong with him in that department, and said the whole thing was Zelda's way of trying to destroy him. In connection with this episode, Meyers is able to write, in a sentence whose ramifications I, for one, find depressing in the extreme: "There is a surprising amount of evidence about Fitzgerald's sexual organ and sexual performance." Meyers's own conclusion is that the Hemingway story is itself highly dubious—that Hemingway probably made it all up.

Yet, on the whole, so unsympathetic is Meyers to Fitzgerald that one wonders if he ever felt the attraction of his writing. Or might it be that he finds the chasm so great between the charm of the writing and the squalor of the life that he has felt the need to provide mainly a chronicle of the chasm? Whatever the case, the spirit of Meyers's biography tends to be prosecutorial. He does not forgive Fitzgerald much, and uses everything at hand against him.

Right out of the gate, we learn that "Fitzgerald inherited his elegance and propensity to failure from his father, his social insecurity and absurd behavior from his mother." Witnesses are brought in to testify that the young Fitzgerald was egotistical, solipsistic, undisciplined, a lightweight, a bad hat in almost every regard. "Fitzgerald joined the army for the same reasons that he went to Princeton," Meyers writes characteristically. "It was the fashionable thing to do."

As the chronicle continues, wherever possible Meyers underscores Fitzgerald's imperceptiveness, and he was, true enough, a young man on whom much was lost. Meyers also stresses Fitzgerald's irresponsibility, his obtuse politics, his selling-out to the temptation for easy money, his pathetic masochism when among men he took to be his betters (chiefly Wilson and Hemingway), his need for approval, his selfishness, his failure as a parent (the Fitzgeralds "had very little to do with Scottie's day-to-day life"), his infidelities, his endless dramatization of his own self-pity, and, to round things off nicely, his anti-Semitism (deployed when he was drunk, against his last lady friend, Sheila Graham).

Meyers's bill of complaint could be extended; and none of it, even an admiring reader of Fitzgerald is bound to allow, rings entirely false. Yet though Meyers has shown the depth of the discrepancy between the man and the work, he has not been able to account for the attraction of that work.

* *Scott Fitzgerald: A Biography*. HarperCollins, 400 pp., \$27.50.

WRITING in his later days to the young novelist and screenwriter Budd Schulberg, Fitzgerald said himself that he "used to have a beautiful talent once," adding that even now "nothing I ever write can ever be completely bad." He was right about that—just as he was right when, sadly, he told Joseph Mankiewicz, the Hollywood producer (who rewrote Fitzgerald's first and only credited screenplay, *Three Comrades*): "I'm a good writer—honest." And he was right, too, when, in the year of his death, he wrote to Maxwell Perkins, his editor at Scribner's, that "even now there is little published in American fiction that doesn't slightly bear my stamp—in a small way I was an original."

I used to think Fitzgerald was a writer best read when young, but now, having reread him, I find myself newly impressed with the quality of his prose, the acuity of his generalizations, his ability to create great lyrical moments through dialogue and description. He knew how to do purple in many different, splendid shades. He can put one on the French Riviera in a single sentence, as here, from *Tender Is the Night*: "They drank the bottle of wine while a faint wind rocked the pine-needles and the sensuous heat of early afternoon made blinding freckles on the checkered luncheon cloth." Sex in a Fitzgerald novel has a crisp, clean quality, and is left to the imagination of the reader, which is where it must remain if it is not to dominate a novel. The consummation of the flirtation between Rosemary Hoyt and Dick Diver, in *Tender Is the Night*, is handled with admirable economy: "She wanted to be taken and she was, and what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last."

Read alongside Jeffrey Meyers's biography, Matthew Bruccoli's recent collection of letters reminds us that the saving remnant in Fitzgerald was the part of him that was always the artist. He once declared that he "had done very little thinking, save within the problems of my craft." But about his craft he really did think long and deeply. "I honestly believed," he wrote to his daughter toward the end of his life, "that *with no effort on my part* I was a sort of magician with words—an odd delusion on my part when I had worked so desperately hard to develop a hard, colorful prose style." Not only did he come to understand that the lesson of the artist was effort, unremitting effort, but he understood quite well that the nature of his own talent was poetic, and what it required to come to fruition in prose was "assimilation of material and careful selection of it, or more bluntly: having something to say and an interesting, highly developed way of saying it."

Fitzgerald was a true artist, both by gift and by desire. This may be why he was such a bust in Hollywood. He wrote to Maxwell Perkins that "I just couldn't make the grade as a hack—that, like everything else, requires a certain practiced excellence." But perhaps more convincing is the

reason he gave to his wife: "As soon as I feel I am writing to a cheap specification, my pen freezes and my talent vanishes over the hill." His own most cherished hope was that "some day I can combine the verve of [*This Side of*] *Paradise*, the unity of *The Beautiful & Damned* and the lyric quality of *Gatsby*, its aesthetic soundness, into something worthy of the admiration of those few" people who knew what true literary art looks like.

NO ONE reading Fitzgerald's letters, or his novels, or the pieces in *The Crack-Up* can think him unintelligent. He was, for example, deft at reading other people's novels, and he could be penetrating about his friends. Already in his twenties he had Edmund Wilson's psychological number, writing to an acquaintance that Wilson "appreciates feeling after it's been filtered through a temperament but his soul is a bit *sec* [dry]"—which seems to me bang on about Edmund Wilson.

At the same time, one recognizes that Fitzgerald's intelligence was of a particular kind, being almost wholly at the service of imagination. Take the following lengthy passage about Dick Diver at a psychiatric congress in Munich:

He had no intention of attending so much as a single session of the congress—he could imagine it well enough, new pamphlets by Bleuler and the elder Forel that he could better digest at home, the paper by the American who cured *dementia praecox* by pulling out his patients' teeth or cauterizing their tonsils, the half-derisive respect with which this idea would be greeted, for no more reason than that America was such a rich and powerful country. The other delegates from America—Schwartz with his saint's face and his infinite patience in straddling two worlds as well as dozens of commercial alienists with hangdog faces, who would be present partly to increase their standing, and hence their reach for the big plums of the criminal practice, partly to master novel sophistries that they could weave into their stock-in-trade, to the infinite confusion of all values. There would be cynical Latins, and some man of Freud's from Vienna. Articulate among them would be the great Jung, bland, supervigorous, on his rounds between the forests of anthropology and the neuroses of schoolboys. At first there would be an American cast to the congress, almost Rotarian in its forms and ceremonies, then the closer-knit European vitality would fight through, and finally the Americans would play their trump card, the announcement of colossal gifts and endowments of great new plants and training schools, and in the presence of the figures the Europeans would blanch and walk timidly. But he would not be there to see.

Fitzgerald picked up such rich material through the years that his own wife spent in and out of insane asylums in Europe and America. But he knew how to use it—to integrate it beautifully

into the thought of a character, a practicing psychiatrist, Dick Diver, considered by many critics to be more intelligent than his creator, F. Scott Fitzgerald. This is what I mean by intelligence at the service of imagination. Dumb like a fox, they used to say; Fitzgerald was dumb like a writer.

But what chiefly continues to make Fitzgerald's writing of enduring interest is his great theme: loss. Only once did he find the perfect objective correlative—the perfect relation between theme and concrete case—and that was in the fantast Jay Gatsby, whose extravagant aspirations include buying back the past. Of course, Fitzgerald was more than a bit of a fantast himself, with a past he would himself spend many years wishing to recapture. "I remember riding in a taxi one afternoon between very tall buildings under a mauve and rosy sky," he once wrote about his early success in Manhattan; "I began to bawl because I had everything I wanted and knew I would never be so happy again." This was after his first novel had been established as a best-seller, he had won the hand of his beloved Zelda, and the future looked to be all caviar and champagne and beaches on the Riviera.

As everyone knows, it did not quite turn out that way. Fitzgerald's drinking quickly got out of control, Zelda broke down in a permanent way, and to keep his shaky but expensive ship afloat, he began writing things for which he had not much respect. As usual his own best analyst, Fitzgerald, in an essay entitled "Early Success," makes the case with penetrating precision:

The man who arrives young believes that he exercises his will because his star is shining. The man who only asserts himself at thirty has a balanced idea of what will-power and fate have each contributed, the one who gets there at forty is liable to put the emphasis on will alone. This comes out when the storms strike your craft.

Although nothing Fitzgerald wrote was utterly without interest—his winning style saw to that—he would never again, after *The Great Gatsby*, write anything that altogether pleased him. This, too, was part of his sadness. "I am not a great man, but sometimes I think the impersonal and objective quality of my talent and the sacrifices of it, in pieces, to preserve its essential value has some sort of epic grandeur," he wrote to his daughter near the end of his life, adding: "Anyhow after hours I nurse myself with delusions of that sort."

Too rarely did Fitzgerald hit this impersonal and objective quality in his fiction. So we are left with this Midwestern Irishman, who claimed to have "a two-cylinder inferi-

ority complex," and who seems to have spent at least a third of his adult life drunk and another third recovering from drunkenness or fighting to stay away from drink. With the last third, he wrote a handful of memorable stories, one slender, nearly perfect novel, two gallant fictional failures, and some confessional writing that brilliantly dramatized his own self-pity. Why does he continue to fascinate?

Some would read in Fitzgerald's life a cautionary tale. But what is its moral? If you drink, stay home? Don't marry a maniac? Be careful how you handle success, remembering, as he wrote in *The Beautiful and Damned*, that "the victor belongs to the spoils"? Not very edifying, any of this.

What is impressive is that, even after Jeffrey Meyers has reported the worst about Fitzgerald, he remains a poignant figure. There was no meanness in him; for a writer, he was singularly unmalicious. "I have honestly never gone in for hating," he wrote to Hemingway, attempting a rapprochement in their relations. One cannot even blame Fitzgerald for being a bad husband or father. For one thing, he beat us to the punch by asserting it himself; for another, it really was not quite true, because by his own lights, and under his own crippling difficulties, he did all he could, financially and spiritually, for his wife and daughter, even sacrificing his talent for them.

No, the interest in F. Scott Fitzgerald is that he felt so deeply, and, when he was going well, expressed so beautifully, so many things that other Americans have felt but have not been anywhere near so able to express: social unease in his own country, a yearning for an elegant and orderly life, and an inner sense (which in a letter to his daughter he ascribed to all great men) that life "is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat, and that the redeeming things are not 'happiness and pleasure' but the deeper satisfactions that come out of the struggle."

It was in *The Crack-Up* that Fitzgerald wrote that "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function." Even though Fitzgerald could not always do this in his own life, he posed precisely this problem in his best fiction, where classic (one is tempted to call it American) optimism and yearning are countered by the tragic truth that, as he once put it, "the natural state of the sentient adult is a qualified unhappiness." These two opposed notions were at the heart of his fiction. They remain at the heart of not only American but all human life. That F. Scott Fitzgerald picked up on this contradiction in the human spirit as early as he did, and worked it as richly as he did, is the reason that he was perfectly justified in thinking that "in a *small* way I was an original."

The Curious Case of Kiryas Joel

Jeremy Rabkin

SUPREME Court rulings on issues of church and state are a tangle of conflicting impulses. On the one hand, the Court has struggled over the past quarter-century to avoid even the slightest hint that it is “endorsing” or “advancing” religion. On the other hand, the Court has simultaneously sought to avoid the appearance of persecuting religion, and also to avoid appearing “insensitive” to religious minorities. The strains in this agenda were conspicuously on display in the case of *Kiryas Joel v. Grumet*, decided this past June.

By the time it made its way to the Supreme Court, *Kiryas Joel* had aroused a good deal of attention. Some two-dozen groups—representing a wide range of religious faiths, civil-liberties organizations, and the public-education lobby—submitted *amicus* briefs. Some hoped that the Court would use this case to signal a more accommodating stance toward religion, while others warned the Court to maintain its past vigilance against any “breach in the wall between church and state.”

But the ruling in *Kiryas Joel* will not bring lasting reassurance to either side—or stability to the law. The decision only highlights the underlying contradictions in the Court’s approach to religion, and confirms that, in its self-appointed role as the ultimate umpire of American pluralism, the Supreme Court now finds itself in a very strained and precarious position. What is more, in a nation where no ethnic group or religious sect enjoys anything approaching a commanding majority, the Court has begun to prefer some minorities over others.

KIRYAS Joel, formerly an undeveloped subdivision of the town of Monroe, New York, was incorporated as a self-governing “village” in 1977, a few years after hasidic followers of the Satmar rebbe* began moving into the area from Brooklyn. The Satmars were soon embroiled in disputes with Monroe officials who claimed that they were violating local zoning requirements (by housing their large, extended families in homes desig-

nated for single-family use), so they sought independent status for their part of town. Because their non-Satmar neighbors strongly objected to seceding from Monroe, the boundaries of the new village were drawn to include only Satmar families and no one else.

The residents of Kiryas Joel sent their children to private religious schools, but the community’s handicapped children needed special services which these schools could not easily supply. Monroe public-school officials initially agreed to provide these services in the annex of a religious school in Kiryas Joel. But this arrangement ended after the Supreme Court ruled in 1985 (in *Aguilar v. Felton*) that public-school teachers could not be sent into private religious schools.

Some Satmar families then tried the public schools outside the village where special services were provided. But their children—suffering from physical and mental disabilities, dressed in the exotic garb of the Satmars, speaking limited English (Yiddish is their first language), and constrained by special dietary restrictions—were subjected to so much mockery and abuse by other students that all but one of the families felt compelled to withdraw. Many of the children thereafter went without the special programs they were legally entitled to receive under state and federal law.

The Satmars then looked for alternatives. The Supreme Court had ruled in 1977 (in *Wolman v. Walter*) that children from parochial schools could receive instruction from public-school teachers at a “neutral site,” such as a trailer parked across the street from the school. But officials in the Monroe-Woodbury Central School District refused to offer this arrangement to the Satmar Hasidim, evidently because of the expense involved. A suit by the Satmars to force the school district to change its policy was rejected by the state courts in New York.

And so, in an attempt to solve the problem, Governor Mario Cuomo signed a bill into law in 1989 that authorized the village of Kiryas Joel to

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* Like all Hasidim, the Satmar are ultra-Orthodox, but unlike others, they oppose the establishment of an independent Jewish state before the advent of the Messiah, and therefore refuse to recognize or support Israel.

establish its own separate public-school district. There, a school was begun that eventually came to serve some 150 handicapped children—many of them, as it happens, from non-hasidic families living in the area. The Kiryas Joel school board hired teachers and administrators from outside the Satmar community, and the school was operated on a coeducational and entirely secular basis, in exacting conformity with past strictures of the Supreme Court.

This arrangement, nevertheless, provoked a legal challenge (filed by Louis Grumet, president of the New York Association of School Boards), on First Amendment grounds. In divided votes, New York state courts held against Kiryas Joel. The Kiryas Joel school district then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which delivered its ruling on the case in June. In a 6-3 vote, the Justices agreed that the New York law establishing the Kiryas Joel school district was indeed in violation of the First Amendment guarantee against religious establishment.

EVEN by the standards of contemporary case law, the ruling in *Kiryas Joel* broke new ground in the Court's squeamishness about government accommodation of religion. For in a number of earlier cases, the Court has held that the First Amendment *requires* government to accommodate special religious circumstances. These contrary rulings cast a revealing light on the decision in *Kiryas Joel*.

For example, in 1963 (in *Sherbert v. Verner*), the Court decreed that South Carolina could not deny unemployment benefits to a Seventh Day Adventist who refused to accept a job requiring her to work on Saturday. In 1972 it ruled (in *Wisconsin v. Yoder*) that Wisconsin could not enforce its school-attendance laws against the Old Order Amish. (The Court accepted the Amish plea that anything more than primary education would have a corrupting effect on their children.)

Of course, this is not the whole story. For if in one line of cases the Court has tended to maintain that the First Amendment (in its free-exercise clause) requires government to accommodate religion by means of special exemptions, in another line of cases it has been insisting that the First Amendment (in its establishment clause) forbids government from endorsing, favoring, or "advancing" religion.

In the 1960's, the Court began to emphasize the danger of subtle coercion that is posed to students who do not belong to the dominant Christian faith. It held, for example, that non-sectarian prayers and Bible readings are impermissible in the public schools. Thus, while it required South Carolina to respect the sabbatarian convictions of a Seventh Day Adventist, in 1985 (in *Thornton v. Calder*), the Court turned around to rule that Connecticut could not require employers to respect the sabbatarian convictions of

all employees. The reason? The Connecticut statute provided protection not merely to a beleaguered religious minority but to Christians as a class, and was therefore too "broad-based."

A number of Justices have protested from the outset that distinctions like these would embroil the Court in impossible contradictions. The conflict between the two lines of precedents reached an absurd culmination in a 1989 case (*County of Allegheny v. ACLU*). Here, the Court ruled that the city of Pittsburgh was prohibited by the Constitution from displaying a Christmas crèche on public property, but not from displaying a Hanukkah menorah—because the latter, the Court maintained, would not be seen as an endorsement of the Jewish faith.

STILL, however contradictory the legal logic, Court decisions did follow a readily intelligible *political* pattern. Exotic and marginal sects, like the Amish and the Seventh Day Adventists, were seen by the Court as plausible candidates for special protection in the name of "free-exercise," while major religious denominations—like Catholics or traditional Protestants—were restricted in the name of preventing an "establishment of religion."

The *Kiryas Joel* case would appear to represent a notable deviation from this pattern. The Court looked at the Satmar Hasidim, a group which more than rivals the Old Order Amish in its exotic remove from the mainstream, yet proceeded to quail at the thought that the state might provide it with a special accommodation. In reaching this conclusion, the Court acknowledged that the Kiryas Joel school operated in an entirely secular manner. But the Court still condemned the school district as an improper gerrymander, tailored solely for the convenience of a particular religious group. In the Court's view, the New York state law creating the school district had improperly singled out the Satmar Hasidim for a special privilege not available to other groups.

But, it should be noted, the Supreme Court has never been much troubled by gerrymandering when the beneficiaries were minorities it has deemed deserving. In 1977, for example, the Court (in *United Jewish Organizations v. Carey*) upheld a scheme expressly designed to increase the number of districts that would elect black representatives in Brooklyn. By coincidence, this redistricting plan was challenged by hasidic Jews, who protested that their votes had been spread among several precincts, thereby diluting their own electoral clout. The Supreme Court turned a deaf ear to their plea.

In 1993 (in *Shaw v. Reno*), the Court, in a 5-4 decision, did voice doubts about a racially-gerrymandered district in North Carolina because its eel-shaped configuration was too "bizarre." But here, too, the Court held that race could legiti-

mately be considered in drawing electoral maps as long as it was not the only factor taken into account. Moreover, the dissenting Justices insisted that such racial gerrymandering was fully in accord with the Constitution, at least when done for the benefit of an officially recognized "minority" group. Three of the four defenders of gerrymandering in *Reno* (Justices Souter, Stevens, and Blackmun) held only one year later that the *Kiryas Joel* school district was an unconstitutional gerrymander; the fourth, Justice White, was replaced on the high Court by Justice Ginsburg, who then also voted to condemn the *Kiryas Joel* school district.

EVEN more strained is the Court's contention in *Kiryas Joel* that accommodations to religion are forbidden if they happen to benefit only a single religious group. Speaking for the majority, Justice Souter acknowledged that in authorizing a separate school district, the New York state legislature had acted from permissible motives, but he insisted that this was not the point:

We simply refuse to ignore that the method it chose is one that aids a particular religious community, as such, rather than all groups similarly interested in separate schooling.

But since no one else had come forward to request such an arrangement, the Court could not know whether other groups were "similarly interested in separate schooling"—much less whether the New York legislature would have refused them the accommodation it made available to *Kiryas Joel*. As it happens, the Catholic Church and a coalition of Orthodox Jewish organizations—representing the two main sponsors of private religious schools in New York—submitted briefs in support of the Satmar Hasidim. In other words, the very groups most likely to seek such arrangements were keen to have the Court endorse the *Kiryas Joel* school district.

The Supreme Court itself displayed the very kind of favoritism it now deems improper when, in *Yoder*, it ordered Wisconsin to exempt the Amish (and only the Amish) from school-attendance laws. In *Kiryas Joel*, a concurring opinion by Justices Ginsburg and Blackmun acknowledged that the Satmar children had experienced "panic, fear, and trauma" when "leaving their own community and being with people whose ways were so different." But now the Justices insisted that

the State could have taken steps to alleviate the children's fear by teaching their schoolmates to be tolerant and respectful of Satmar customs. . . . Instead the State responded with a solution that affirmatively supports a religious sect's interest in segregating itself and preventing its children from associating with their neighbors. The isolation of these chil-

dren . . . unquestionably increased the likelihood that they would remain within the fold, faithful adherents of their parents' religious faith.

Every word of this argument could apply as well to the Amish in the *Yoder* case. The Amish rejected high-school education because of their desire to live in a "church community separate and apart from the world," which, as a cantankerous dissent by Justice Douglas pointed out at the time, meant that their children would have great difficulty in ever joining the wider world. Only with the Satmar Hasidim, it seems, has it become constitutionally suspect to bring up one's children as "faithful adherents of their parents' religious faith."

Even in recent years, the Court has not repudiated accommodations to religion for other particular groups. In *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), for example, it said Oregon could, if it wished, give adherents of an Indian peyote cult a unique exemption from the state's drug laws. Ironically, Justice Souter, the author of the Court's opinion against the *Kiryas Joel* school district, had himself cited the peyote exemption as a proper accommodation to religion in a case decided only two years ago (*Lee v. Weisman*, 1992).

No one has yet challenged such standard practices as public-school closings on Yom Kippur in cities like New York. But if taken literally, the logic of the *Kiryas Joel* case suggests that even such practices would be impermissible because they are undertaken to accommodate one particular group.

WHY, then, did the Court flout its own precedents to reach this troubling result? Running through the legal briefs, and indeed through previous rulings in this case, are a number of recurring insinuations: that the Satmars had been intolerably crafty in manipulating school laws, that they are racist and sexist, chauvinistic and fanatical. In short, they are politically incorrect.

Thus, lower courts in New York repeated the claim (drawn from a hostile sociological study) that within their own private schools the Satmars separate the sexes, with the boys "educated in Torah" and the girls "instructed on what they will need to function as adult women"—as if girls were given no religious training but simply primed to be subservient housewives. Such "facts" should have had no legal bearing in any event, since the public school for the handicapped in *Kiryas Joel* was run on the same coeducational basis as are all public schools. Nevertheless, *amicus* briefs submitted to the Supreme Court rehashed, word for word, this "description" of the Satmar's objectionable educational practices.

One judge on the New York State Court of

Appeals, in the course of explaining why the district was unconstitutional, thought it worthwhile to quote from still another sociological study, according to which the “ethnocentric attitude that [Satmars] alone are capable of upholding the Torah solidifies the hasidic belief that all other groups are inferior.” The American Federation of Teachers, in its own *amicus* brief, dredged up testimony from an unrelated lawsuit in New York city in which a Satmar parent says:

“It’s not that these Hispanic people are bad, it’s that they’re different. . . . They are not a good influence on our girls. . . . If we have our kids learning with them, they’ll be corrupted. . . . We don’t hate these people but we don’t like them.”

These irrelevant citations were then given a particularly nasty twist in *amicus* briefs that variously characterized Kiryas Joel as a “theocratic municipality,” a village practicing “religious apartheid,” a community analogous to the “Vatican and Mecca,” even to “Qom” (the holy city of the Iranian Ayatollahs) and “the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas.” In other words, rather than being quaint and charming, the Satmars are offensive, bigoted—and dangerous.

It is difficult to make sense of the *Kiryas Joel* ruling except on the assumption that some Justices were influenced by these claims.

THE last word on this matter, however, has not yet been spoken. In response to the June ruling, the New York state legislature (with the support of Governor Cuomo) enacted a new law designed to overcome the Supreme Court’s objections: any incorporated village in the state which meets certain specified

conditions may now vote to organize a separate school district for itself. The residents of Kiryas Joel have once again voted to do this. But the New York Association of School Boards, which sponsored the original suit against Kiryas Joel, has announced that it is preparing a legal challenge to this new law as well.

And so the battle continues. One of the striking features of this particular battlefield is the persistent claim in *amicus* briefs opposing the Satmar Hasidim that America’s traditions of tolerance and pluralism will be endangered if the Court relaxes its vigilance against excessive governmental accommodation of religion. These briefs were filed by all of the liberal Jewish organizations, along with such liberal Protestant groups as the Unitarians, Methodists, and Presbyterians, by civil-liberties organizations, and by the various public-school lobbies. Yet it is the groups who filed briefs in *support* of the Satmars who most clearly reflect pluralism at work: a remarkably diverse coalition including Orthodox Jews, the Catholic Church, the Southern Baptist Convention, and other evangelical Protestant denominations.

While opponents of the Kiryas Joel school district speak in the name of “diversity and understanding,” they have done their best to stigmatize a community that is genuinely different, but no more different than others that have been readily accommodated in the past. In defiance of logic and legal precedent, they have gotten the Supreme Court to agree. It is not easy to see how these relentless (one might almost say fanatical) legal attacks on the Kiryas Joel school district can be regarded as a contribution to pluralism and tolerance.

Bob Woodward Meets Bill Clinton

Tod Lindberg

IS THERE a more celebrated journalist, or for that matter a more reviled one, than Bob Woodward, the Pulitzer prize-winning assistant managing editor for investigations at the *Washington Post*? No one can deny that, for better or worse, his daily reporting with Carl Bernstein on Watergate contributed mightily to the downfall of the Nixon administration twenty years ago. The two books that came out of that episode, *All the President's Men* and *The Final Days*, are as classic as they are controversial still.

Since then, Woodward has given us a look inside the Supreme Court (*The Brethren*, written with Scott Armstrong); an explosive and heavily litigated biography of a Hollywood superstar (*Wired: The Short Life and Fast Times of John Belushi*); *Veil*, a chronicle of "the secret wars of the CIA" during the Reagan administration, including, incredibly, a purported death-bed interview with the CIA's William Casey; and *The Commanders*, a portrait reaching to the very top of the United States military establishment, published as the nation prepared to go to war in the Persian Gulf.

Along the way, there have been smaller projects for the *Post*, alone or in collaboration—from a revisionist assessment of Vice President Dan Quayle to a series on the Bush administration's economic policy-making. (The latter, published in the heat of the 1992 presidential campaign, confirmed forever the American Right's assessment of Richard Darman, Bush's budget director, as an American Rasputin.) And now we have *The Agenda*,* Woodward's account of

policy-making in the first year of the Clinton administration—a blow-by-blow, at times minute-by-minute, account of the internal struggles within the fledgling administration.

Woodward's reputation among his "peers," the elite of establishment journalism, is a hard thing to assess. Some, although probably few, express unreserved admiration. Others have a cavil here or there, or worse: genuine doubts about the veracity of the William Casey interview, for example, are quite widespread, and so is skepticism concerning Woodward's longstanding reliance on unnamed sources and interviews on "deep background." In the end, though, no one would dispute that Woodward's reportage has, on numerous occasions, landed with nuclear impact. That constitutes real journalistic achievement.

Besides, if his colleagues express reservations about Woodward—something they are often willing to do only when on "deep background" themselves—their reaction must in part be owing to good old-fashioned envy. For who among them has broken as much news, sold as many books, obtained as much access to power, and as often persuaded power to talk?

AS FOR conservative, nonestablishment journalists, they have taken a rather different view of Bob Woodward, as have conservatives in general. Many have held a deep grudge against him ever since the impeachment clouds began to swirl around Richard Nixon—in some cases simply out of loyalty to Nixon, in other cases out of dismay at the damage the protracted Watergate crisis did to the United States and its position in the world.

Then, too, Woodward occupies a position of preeminence in a media culture dominated by liberal and adversarial views; he is, in some ways, the apotheosis of that culture, which the Right tends to regard as implacably hostile to conservatives and conservatism. Finally, some Woodward-hating among conservative journalists is born of the conviction that Woodward is a fabricator who has utterly discredited himself and should be discredited by others.

At the same time, there are more than a few closeted conservative admirers of Woodward, willing to distinguish the messenger from the message. Of course, Woodward himself is the last person on earth one would mistake for a conservative. But it is quite apparent that he gets to talk to important people, often some of the most important people in the nation's political life, and just as often he gets their story. It is absurd to underestimate that fact, on grounds either of ideology or of personal hostility.

Thanks to *The Agenda*, it is likely that Woodward will find his conservative fan club growing. For at last there is in place a Democratic administration, along with a Democratic Congress, and it turns out that Woodward's reportage is no more forgiving and no less devastating when the subject is Democrats than when it is Republicans.

There has never been a political book quite like *The Agenda*. To be sure, there have been similar looks into the corridors of power, but usually we have had to wait for them until long after an administration has left town. The task of the author of such a book is to sift through innumerable press reports, vast piles of public and private documents obtained at great labor and expense, self-serving memoirs of administration officials, and transcripts of interviews with participants whose memory has faded with time and whose reason has imposed retrospective

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order on events that may have seemed very different as they were unfolding. By contrast, the insect Woodward has pinned to the wall for our detailed examination is still alive, and wriggling.

THE main part of this book is taken up by a single story: the new administration's struggle to pass its five-year budget plan. This, the top item on the administration's agenda, was a program meant to reverse the wrongs of twelve years of Republican policy, end "gridlock," and bring fundamental change to the way Washington does business.

The most important feature of the plan was deficit reduction, to the tune of \$500 billion over five years. This was an amount large enough, in the view of the President's economic advisers, to earn the blessing of Wall Street. The bond market would reward the administration with lower interest rates, which in turn would stimulate the economy and allow the President to make good on his other main commitment, the expensive "investments" he had promised that would benefit the economy in the long run—things like education and job training, rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, and expanding the government's role in industry research and development.

From the beginning, however, the administration was internally divided over the relative priority of deficit reduction and "investment." The clash was between the old-guard establishment of the Democratic party and the Young Turks whose message was decidedly more populist. These divisions, between Wall Street and Main Street, deepened as the consequences of the commitment to a \$500-billion target played out through the budget deal's final passage. The fights, the backbiting, the bitch-fests, the recriminations, the pep-talks, the maneuvering—all the things that accompany policy-making in any administration, and sometimes constitute the process of policy-making itself—are detailed here, page after vicious, lush, delicious page.

Scenes from an administration:

- Paul Begala, White House con-

sultant, and Alice Rivlin, deputy budget director, in a February 1, 1992 meeting in which Begala is explaining what he and other White House consultants call "the Story," the pitch to the American people. One element of the Story is that the deficit picture is far bleaker than the Clinton team imagined during the campaign:

"We have to walk people through the journey the President has gone from November to February. We have to explain why the deficit got worse and how it got worse," Begala said, focusing on the Story.

"That's nonsense," Rivlin said bluntly, her voice cold with assured professionalism. "Bill Clinton knew where this deficit was going," she said, adding that they had to face the fact that the campaign fundamentally misrepresented the situation. There was no need to revisit that journey, she said.

Begala was steaming. To him, Rivlin symbolized all that was wrong with Clinton's new team of Washington hands, and represented the Volvo-driving, National Public Radio-listening, wine-drinking liberalism that he felt had crippled the Democratic party for decades.

- Clinton on Air Force One, after learning about a scheduling mistake that had resulted in a slight of Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley:

"Who the hell could make such a dumb fucking mistake?" the President bellowed out. He raged on. . . . In the confined spaces of the plane, Clinton stormed on and on. It was truly awful, on the edge of controlled violence. "Why are we not organized to do this?" Clinton screamed. [Presidential counselor David R.] Gergen, watching the outburst, was stunned. He had never quite seen an adult, let alone a President, in such a rage.

- Along the same lines, Clinton at a July 3 meeting where Hillary Rodham Clinton has just dressed down a dozen or so senior advisers:

Clinton rose to his feet. He was seething, and he just started yelling. He picked up where Hillary had left off, reenforc-

ing [*sic*] her points. [Presidential counselor George] Stephanopoulos almost tuned out. He had seen and experienced Clinton's temper tantrums so many times before. Others called them "purple fits" or "earthquakes." Stephanopoulos simply called it "the wave," an overpowering, prolonged rage that could shock an outsider, and often was way out of proportion to what caused it. He couldn't listen to the precise words, which really didn't matter anyway. The words were also best unremembered.

- A summer Oval Office meeting attended by Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, chief of staff Mack McLarty, and congressional liaison Howard Paster, during which Clinton (in Woodward's telling) was "rambling on inconclusively about the endless compromises and delays on investments and health care that had left him with a Wall Street plan":

As this particular conversation progressed, Clinton turned to Gore. "What can I do?" he asked the Vice President. "You can get with the goddamn program!" Gore answered tersely, his own exasperation boiling over. . . . Clinton paused a long time, the scene virtually stopped in freeze-frame. The President finally laughed. Mildly. "Okay," Clinton said.

- Clinton, on the eve of the final Senate vote, in a telephone conversation with Senator Robert Kerrey of Nebraska, after hearing that Kerrey, a Democrat, was planning to vote against the plan:

Clinton's tone was visceral and personal. "If you want to bring this presidency down," the President said, "then go ahead! I was told that this was going to be the good thing to do, and I took on the most difficult problem the nation faced and suddenly I'm regretting it. I wish I hadn't done it. All I'm doing is catching grief for doing what everybody knows is the most difficult problem we face."

Kerrey would ultimately change his mind and support the deal, providing the crucial 50th vote in the Senate for final passage and allowing the tie to be broken by Gore.

Woodward describes the wild whoops of celebration in the Oval Office, yet the administration's own sense of the victory it had narrowly won seems better expressed in the sentiments voiced by the President in his heated phone call with Senator Kerrey. He "was told" this was the right thing for the nation, says Clinton, who seems not only confused and uncertain about the direction he is imposing on the nation, but indifferent as well: "I took on . . . I'm regretting. . . . I wish I hadn't. . . . All I'm doing is catching grief."

The themes that emerge from *The Agenda* are troubling on more than a few levels. It was long apparent that there were serious ideological fault lines in the Clinton White House; but the depth of the division presented here is nonetheless startling. The hard-Left views of Paul Begala and others—and the apocalyptic terms in which they see their intramural dust-ups—may help explain both the evident difficulty this administration has had in making decisions and the colossal missteps some of those decisions have represented.

The personalities revealed are likewise disconcerting in the extreme: the righteous hatred Begala feels for Alice Rivlin, for example, suggests a person resolved to stamp out Rivlinism in all its forms.

And as for the President. . . .

Twenty years ago, readers were appalled to learn from Woodward's *The Final Days* that Richard Nixon had once asked Henry Kissinger to kneel with him in prayer. But that book appeared a year after Nixon had gone into exile in San Clemente. Now we read about Clinton's terrifying bouts of temper even as they occur. Suppose *The Haldeman Diaries* had been published a year-and-a-half into Nixon's first term, instead of just this past season: that is how internally revealing, and how damaging, *The Agenda* is.

BUT if one would have expected so remarkable a piece of journalism to be celebrated, at least by other Washington journalists, one would have been mistaken. Although it was, of course, the talk of Washing-

ton in the weeks following its release, *The Agenda* was talked about in terms that reflect some odd preoccupations and vanities.

The culture of official Washington, effectively made up of everyone in the city who takes an interest in politics and policy, is based on knowing what is "really" going on. Daily—sometimes hourly, or by the minute—phone lines and fax machines burn with raw material that may or may not end up on tonight's news broadcasts or in tomorrow's paper, but is endlessly fascinating to those who possess and circulate it. Many Washingtonians read newspapers solely to see *how* the news is being covered, who is spinning what tale, what parts of a story have been left untold, and so on. In addition, there are the things that are much discussed but that will never appear in the paper—from matters of high political or legal strategy to salacious gossip. To be in possession of such commodities is to be in an enviable position.

Since "knowing" is the primary virtue in Washington, one can hardly admit to not knowing something if one is supposed to be in the know. And so the main Washington reaction to Woodward was: we knew that. The statement was untrue, but it had to be made.

Fortunately for Woodward's sales, though, America does not seem to share this particular form of vanity. Long after the book had ceased to be interesting to official Washington (even though everybody in Washington was buying and reading it), it debuted as No. 1 on the *New York Times* best-seller list. There were 700,000 copies in print.

Did *The Agenda* become a huge best-seller because people were desperate to learn everything they could about the 1993 budget deal? Hardly. The truth is that Americans, 57 percent of whom did not vote for Bill Clinton, are desperate to find out who *he* is. It has after all only been three years since Clinton was an unknown governor from a rather small state; no recent presidential candidate (with the exception of Jimmy Carter) has been so obscure. And even many Americans who thought they

got a sense of Clinton during the 1992 campaign have been given cause to wonder. Whether it be campaign promises abandoned, White House scandals, or the untold policy vacillations since Clinton took office, polls consistently show that the President has a credibility problem with the American people. He is not regarded as a man of candor, and consequently people wonder about him. *The Agenda* is most helpful in this regard.

And there is another reason for *The Agenda*'s success. Here is a book that reads like a thriller, yet it is about the actual political leaders of our country, individuals who are, almost all of them, still occupying the same offices in which they held the meetings described here in such lavish detail.

One can only speculate on what the reaction to *The Agenda* was inside those offices: so much dirty laundry, so prominently displayed. Did some find it impossible to read—too intimate, too real? Was it greeted with nervous laughter? Rage? Did people try to persuade themselves that, all things considered, what it said was not so bad? Did they feel that Bob Woodward had betrayed them? Or did it sink in that they had betrayed themselves?

IN ALL administrations, loyalty is considered a cardinal virtue and discretion is its handmaiden. One protects the President. One does not discuss private conversations one has had with him or with one's superiors. Once the President has made a decision, one presents a united front in carrying out his wishes (even if one is trying to get him to change his mind).

What happened here? How on earth did so many people in and around the Clinton White House get it into their heads that it was a good idea to talk with a reporter, in the most intimate terms, about the doings of this administration?

There was, to be sure, the identity of the reporter. This was Bob Woodward, the man who had brought down the hated Nixon, the living legend of Washington journalism. Clinton's people may

have thought he was one of them, or at least "with" them in some elemental way. (Certainly Woodward would have done nothing to disabuse them of that notion.) And then, too, it must be highly flattering to be told that Bob Woodward is calling—that he is eager to listen to you and wants to know your thinking.

True, the administration was new, and many of those serving in it had no experience of the executive branch, and were quite young besides. But previous generations of *arrivistes* have found themselves at the red-hot center of Washington's culture of knowing and have instinctively curbed the desire to say too much. There is far more than mere vanity to the act of self-immolation committed by Clinton's people in *The Agenda*, more even than the vanity that is part and parcel of being in a position to know something about the most important political topic of the day.

Oddly, what made *The Agenda* possible was precisely a sense of loyalty—a genuine devotion to Bill Clinton and a feeling of kinship

with his ideals. People talked to Bob Woodward to explain why Bill Clinton was right. Only, which Bill Clinton were they talking about? Again Woodward is helpful:

[George] Stephanopoulos knew that it was a mistake to assume that any one moment with Clinton, any one conversation, day, or even week reflected Clinton's true feelings or unchanging fundamental attitude about something. With any single audience or person, Clinton was generally consistent and had mastered his rap. But he could articulate a totally different, even contradictory rap to the next audience with genuine sincerity. . . . "You've got to keep in mind," Stephanopoulos said to one of his closest associates, that watching Clinton "is like a kaleidoscope. What you see is where you stand and where you're looking at him. He will put one facet toward you, but that is only one facet." Every time, the kaleidoscope would reflect the fragment of stone at the bottom in a unique way, showing a different facet; every person would see a different pattern. It was

real, but it could change in an instant, as soon as Clinton turned.

Thus *The Agenda*: the story of Why Bill and I Are Right, as told by dozens of different individuals, each of whom felt that he and the President were the closest in their thinking, each of whom wanted to protect the President and the principles the two of them presumably shared from the others whose agenda was not Bill Clinton's agenda, and many of whom were more than willing to do dirt to their rivals, including by disclosing the President's wrath with them to an apparently sympathetic reporter.

In short, *The Agenda* paints a portrait that shows, indirectly, what made *The Agenda* possible. At the center, skewered by the pin, is the President of the United States, the embodiment of the other-directed man, a man who fulfills his driving ambition not just by seeming to be but by being all things to all people, until it is impossible to do so any longer. And he is raging.

Contentions

The State Department vs. America

Midge Decter

AS THE diplomatic arm of the world's greatest power, the U.S. Department of State has many, and widely varied, responsibilities. In 1992, the Bush administration added one more: by agreeing, after the country had held out for sixteen years, to sign

the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it placed upon the State Department the responsibility for the preparation of an annual report on the condition of human rights in the U.S.

On September 28, 1994, the first such report, a closely printed document of 213 pages, was submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee. As might be expected, this report was undertaken under

the supervision of the State Department office formerly known as Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and now, for some reason, called Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. The major obligation of this office in the past was to submit to the Congress annual reports on human rights around the world, country by country. Now it is obligated to report to the world organization on its own country as well.

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The format for reporting to the UN is carefully prescribed. It demands coverage of the country's treatment of a whole range of rights and protections, from something as straightforward and simple as the right to a fair trial or the right to freedom of movement, to issues as multifaceted and controversial as the rights of women, the protection of the family, and the rights of minorities in the areas of culture, religion, and language.

In accordance with this prescription, the U.S. report, after a general introduction to the country's demography, economy, and political institutions, consists mainly of a compendium of statutes, federal and state, as well as an account of case law dealing with what the UN defines as human-rights issues. It has clearly been an enormous, and enormously painstaking, job to produce this document; many man-hours in the State and Justice departments, along with other agencies, must have gone into it.

It would seem, however, that while Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor John Shattuck supervised the preparation of this report, in the end he himself was disappointed with the result. Or possibly he found the prescribed format too limiting to encompass his own view of the subject. In any event, in early September, he deemed it advisable to tack on to the body of the report a special introduction intended to add some further clarification about the state of human rights in the United States.

MR. SHATTUCK begins his introduction with a brief but heartfelt historical survey of human-rights law in general, whose antecedents, he tells us, stretch back "to natural-law traditions, the ethical teachings of the world's great religions—both East and West—Greco-Roman law, and the pioneering philosophical work of Hugo Grotius and John Locke." The concept of universal rights, developed in the 18th century, both "nourished international law" and "set the stage for American constitutionalism." Then, the creation of the

League of Nations following World War I provided a major articulation of international human-rights law. And finally after World War II the Allied powers undertook to inscribe Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms into international law, an effort whose capstone was the establishment of the UN and the adoption of its Charter, followed by its two major covenants of international human rights. "Human rights," says Mr. Shattuck, "have come to be recognized as the universal birthright of every man, woman, and child on this planet."

The commanding power of this faith in inalienable human dignity, he continues, resides in the fact that it is not anchored in any particular philosophical, religious, or ideological foundation. The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1948, "achieved inclusiveness precisely because it did not lodge these timeless principles in any specific, and thus inevitably debatable and partial, political program."

HAVING thus provided a sketchy general background, the introduction gets down to the case at hand—the United States. While the American Constitution laid out a blueprint for the realization of the idea of civil and political rights, Mr. Shattuck is eager for us to understand that building the institutions to embody this blueprint has been a long, slow process involving many generations of citizens, "and the task continues to this day." The main body of the report demonstrates that, in Shattuck's own words, U.S. law "provides extensive protection against human-rights abuses by government authorities."

Indeed, the broad conception of rights that has evolved in the course of American history has come to serve as the basis for much of international human-rights law, "and, ironically but fittingly, to set the standard by which the United States is judged by other members of the international community." We must not, then, forget that "Over the course of its history, America has experienced egregious human-rights violations. . . ."

Primary among these violations, Mr. Shattuck reminds us, have been the "enslavement and disenfranchisement of African Americans and the virtual destruction of many Native American civilizations." This history, too, he traces briefly, pointing out how the injustices to blacks persisted after their emancipation and how the heroic and dogged work of the civil-rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's helped to shape both the interpretation and the implementation of constitutional law. "Those efforts to undo the bitter legacy of slavery," he concludes, "continue today."

As for Native Americans, they

have suffered a fate similar to that of many indigenous civilizations: destruction and displacement of their cultures and societies. The lessons of those injustices . . . are also central legacies of American history.

Nor, in Mr. Shattuck's view, are African and Native Americans the only minority groups to have suffered injustice in the United States. America is largely a nation of immigrants, he informs us; annual immigration to the U.S. even today surpasses 900,000; and both socially and economically, these new ethnic minorities often meet with discrimination. And we must also bear in mind the "ongoing struggle for full realization of the rights of women . . . a central feature of the human-rights process in America."

Summing up these dark aspects of the American experience, Mr. Shattuck explains that since the U.S. tends to address its most difficult and divisive human-rights issues through the courts, there are now many areas in which new legal ground is being broken, such as "gender discrimination, the death penalty, abortion, police brutality, and language rights."

AN INTERESTING phenomenon, Mr. Shattuck's little essay. But first, a textual problem: what does he mean when he writes that new legal ground is being broken in such areas as the death penalty, abortion, and language rights?

As to the death penalty, is he

implying that it is a violation of human rights and should therefore be abolished? If so, what does this say about the President at whose pleasure he serves, and who is so fervent a supporter of capital punishment that as governor of Arkansas he refused against much pressure to stop the execution of a retarded man? Is Bill Clinton to be condemned for a crime against human rights? And how can the President sign a document taking such a position on capital punishment?

As for abortion, does Mr. Shattuck regard it as a human right? If so, what new legal ground remains to be broken? To make it available on demand, and at government expense, under any and all circumstances?

Most puzzling of all is Mr. Shattuck's mention of "language rights." With bilingual education already rampant in the U.S., what new ground does Mr. Shattuck want broken here? To ensure that every ethnic group in America is educated, and also helped by government to carry on a good deal of life's business, in the language of its country of origin?

Another practical question one feels impelled to ask Mr. Shattuck about his introduction is to whom it is addressed. At one point he indicates that he wishes the report, presumably including his introduction, to be given wide distribution in order to "foster human-rights education in the United States." Forgetting about whether it is quite proper for the State Department to undertake a domestic educational campaign of this kind, why is it necessary? Is there anyone left in America who does not know that until 30 years ago the blacks had a most unhappy history in this country? Is there anyone, at least anyone who goes to the movies now and then, who does not know full well about how the white man wiped out the Indian's way of life? (On the other hand, in the interest of Mr. Shattuck's own "human-rights education," it might not be amiss for him to read, or maybe re-read, the works of the great Ameri-

can historian Francis Parkman on how human rights fared among many of the Indian tribes themselves, particularly with respect to the treatment of captives, who were tortured as a matter of course and always with fiendish glee.)

Perhaps, then, Mr. Shattuck's introduction is intended after all for the UN Human Rights Committee, at virtually every meeting of which down through the years American delegates have had to endure moral instruction from the representatives of tyrannical, if not downright criminal, governments. Perhaps he has added this introduction to the report in order, to borrow his own words, "to set the standard by which the United States is judged by other members of the international community"—members like Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, China, not to mention several countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Perhaps, as the man in charge of the bureau called Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Mr. Shattuck thought it might be democratic, humane, and supportive of all those bureaucratic laborers in the international vineyard to help them, in current parlance, feel good about themselves.

BUT of course Mr. Shattuck's introduction really has nothing to do with educating the American public or even with consoling his country's detractors. It springs from the same moral and intellectual source as the declaration, in song and story and schoolbook, during the celebration in 1992 of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage of discovery, that the arrival of Europeans in the New World was nothing less than a major human tragedy. A more recent example of the same kind of thing was the Smithsonian Institution's effort to depict the Japanese as the victims of American aggression and cultural imperialism in World War II. (Can the poor Nazis be far behind?)

What accounts for a state of mind in which certain citizens—and even high officials—of the freest society visible to the naked

human eye find it morally attractive to demean, denigrate, and even vilify that society on every possible occasion (even if, as in the case of the Smithsonian, doing so requires the telling of outright lies)?

A common answer to this question is idealism: John Shattuck and his ilk seek a never-ending process of social improvement. Another, related, answer often given is guilt: the felt need to atone for past injustices. But it hardly serves any ideal purpose to make an invidious judgment of a decent society in the face of the massive torture, murder, and manufactured starvation going on in so many other societies. And so far as guilt is concerned, the "we" who most loudly proclaim it always turn out to be talking not about their own wonderful selves but about everyone else, especially you and me.

The real answer, I believe, is greed. Not material but spiritual greed, the lust (as the feminists say in a different context) to have it all: to be freer than anyone has ever been and at the same time to go about trumpeting the ways in which one's freedom is intolerably restricted; to be privileged and yet to claim the pleasures and moral prerogatives of victimization.

It is not easy to understand how American society has come in recent years to stir so much spiritual greed in the souls of so many of those into whose hands it places great social and cultural—and even political—power. Nor is it easy to understand how we have come to tolerate public officials who see nothing wrong with attacking their own country in an international forum, and who seem to believe that there is something positively noble about acts of national self-abasement.

Must one conclude that ingratitude increases as privilege does? If that is the case—and Mr. Shattuck's essay on human rights suggests that it is—then maybe what this country needs is a little more of that process known to the sociologists as the circulation of elites.

Books in Review

The "M" Word

DICTATORSHIP OF VIRTUE: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE BATTLE FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE. BY RICHARD BERNSTEIN. Knopf. 367 pp. \$25.00.

Reviewed by CHESTER E. FINN, JR.

SOMETIMES—mercifully—the kids are hard to fool. At our son's graduation in May, several of his classmates briefed us on which departments of their well-regarded liberal-arts college were intellectually flaccid, politically correct, or beset by grade inflation, and which had clung to openness, balance, and rigor. They were matter-of-fact about the distinction, probably because they could not readily imagine—most likely had never experienced—an educational institution wholly devoted to high standards and free inquiry. They assumed that both sorts of academic departments would naturally exist on campus. But they were clear about the difference, and keenly aware that in some subjects an "A" signified serious accomplishment, while in others it served primarily to denote attendance or, at best, effort.

That vignette does not turn up in Richard Bernstein's estimable look at educational (and other) abominations committed in the name of "multiculturalism"—a doctrine that preaches the inclusion of "underrepresented minorities" yet practices a rigid and exclusionary orthodoxy of its own. But plenty of other stories do. Their vividness and realism are major virtues of this book, which the veteran *New York Times* reporter based on an extended tour that carried him across the land from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Brookline, Massachusetts, to Boul-

der, Colorado, in search of multiculturalism in action.

Some of Bernstein's tales are familiar (who, by now, has not heard of the "water-buffalo" incident at the University of Pennsylvania?); others have been taken from the pages of sundry periodicals; the most illuminating of all are those freshly reported by Bernstein himself.

But this volume is more than a collection of appalling episodes. It develops a dual thesis: first, that a once-liberal impulse to welcome into the public culture more elements of the diverse American experience has merged with the forces of political correctness to create a powerful "dictatorship of virtue." Second, that assimilation into the American mainstream has become a taboo notion; as the new "dictators" strive to suppress the mainstream in the institutions they control, our common culture has itself begun to wither.

Bernstein uses a term favored by scholars of the French Revolution—*dérapiage*, a "skid" or "slide"—to describe what has happened over the past decade or so, as a movement "aimed supposedly at a greater inclusiveness . . . has somehow slipped from its moorings and turned into a new petrified opinion of the sort it was supposed to transcend."

No guillotines have yet been erected in university quads and other public squares, but more than a few university faculty meetings have echoed with rhetoric reminiscent of Robespierre. Bernstein underscores the irony here, as values such as pluralism, diversity, openness, and inclusion are repeatedly invoked to justify actions that smack of authoritarianism, closed-mindedness, and uniformity. To take but one blatant example: even as today's multiculturalists trumpet the merits of diversity, they loudly abhor the "Christian Right," are eager to suppress speech they do not like,

and deny the legitimacy of grievances by people who do not fit into categories bearing the politically-correct stamp.

THE *dérapiage* of "multiculturalism" has borne it in troubling directions, four of which are deftly explored in Bernstein's book.

First, we are losing the delicate balance implied in the motto, "*E pluribus unum*." Instead, a novel conception of American society is gaining sway, one that stresses rival group interests, ineradicable group differences, and deep (if sometimes embellished) group-linked cultural identities. The "*unum*" is downplayed, even scorned, and what Americans have in common with one another is shrunk to a handful of political institutions manipulated by groups to gain advantage.

This is why, for example, the ethnic classifications used in the decennial census bear so much freight today: it is widely perceived that groups gain legitimacy—and, in time, political and economic resources—in proportion to their numbers. Thus, the uproar over the suggestion of a "multiracial" census category (which would clarify the status of the many Americans whose ancestry is truly mixed) has only partly to do with the fact that anything smelling of the "melting pot" is considered noxious. More to the point, racially-distinctive groups see themselves as losing clout if people who would have been counted (however spuriously) within their membership should opt instead for the new designation.

Second, a neosegregation has taken hold. This is visible everywhere, from the proliferation of racially-demarcated dorms and dining halls on campus to the vast superstructure of government-sanctioned affirmative-action schemes, set-asides, and preferences that are fast overwhelming the principles of color-blindness

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and individual merit. It is not surprising that a society which accents its differences rather than its similarities, and which confers power and status on the basis of group identity, will find itself erecting psychological and legal stockades around those groups.

Consider a recent (and seemingly unprecedented) legal maneuver by the Justice Department, which abruptly switched sides in an employment-discrimination case that it had *won* and asked the appellate court to overturn the verdict on the grounds that a worker's race may, after all, be weighed in deciding whom to lay off. We appear to be heading for a kind of self-imposed apartheid that is bound to produce tribal resentments of a sort now visible from Bosnia to Rwanda to Azerbaijan. Under such fissiparous assault, the center cannot hold, particularly when government itself is turned into an agent of group preference.

Third, today's schools and colleges are not just neglecting Western civilization; many of them have begun to impart falsehoods and distortions to our children and grandchildren. Bernstein is at his best in documenting both the incursions of multiculturalism into the curriculum and the enforcement of multiculturalist dogma on campus via discipline policies and speech codes. He also illuminates the political impact of such perversions of scholarship as a recent "study," sponsored by the American Association of University Women, which has been shrewdly employed in a campaign to prove discrimination against girls in the public schools despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. One predictable result, of course, has been heavy pressure for new federal, state, local, and private programs to rectify the alleged outrage.

Fourth, and most fundamentally, multiculturalism and its cousins have politicized the culture itself, erasing the distinction between our shared public culture (school, workplace, media), and our diverse private cultures (kin, church, clubhouse). Bilingual education is just one large instance of the penetration of our public policies by functions and obligations—in this

case, preserving the native tongues and cultures of immigrant children—that were once the work of family, festival, and neighborhood. Society pays twice for this: retarding the assimilation of those children and their families, despite ample evidence that entry into the mainstream is precisely why they went to immense pains to reach our shores; and transferring countless small decisions (will the next bilingual-teaching "hire" be Spanish or Khmer?) into the arena of

interest-group politics, logrolling, and litigation, often engaging the federal government.

Though the Left is frequently and legitimately blamed for the *dérapiage* of contemporary multiculturalism in general, Bernstein notes how smoothly the multiculturalist mindset meshes on certain issues with nativism and older forms of racism. When it comes to immigration policy, for example, some "conservative . . . arguments share a striking common assump-

Rx for Genocide

Cleansing the Fatherland

Nazi Medicine and Racial Hygiene

GÖTZ ALA, PETER CHROUST,
AND CHRISTIAN PROSS

translated by Belinda Cooper

foreword by Michael H. Kater

"It's no wonder this book caused a flurry when first published in Germany. The authors, who are German, offer compelling evidence that the 350 doctors tried at Nuremberg in 1946-47 were not the so-called black sheep of the

German medical profession, but rather a small part of a much larger group of doctors, university professors, scientists and researchers involved in medical crimes. . . . An abundance of evidence, sometimes absorbing, sometimes overwhelming, demonstrates how the Nazis

employed medicine to 'cleanse' Germany of the 'sick, alien, and disturbing'—a goal firmly supported by the intelligentsia. . . . Readers may be driven to examine their own beliefs concerning the benefits of doctor-assisted suicide, when confronted with a society that takes this seemingly benign idea and turns it into a great evil." *Publishers Weekly*

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tion with the arguments of the more strident multiculturalists: neither has much faith in the power of assimilation." Each favors barriers of one sort or another.

How justified is Bernstein's gloom? One can hardly rebut his claim that multiculturalism has "won," though its partisans are obliged to deny it: "Since theirs is an anti-establishment rebellion, a victory of virtue, they thrive by maintaining the fiction that they are nothing but small voices struggling to be heard." In reality, however, they have gained effective control of nearly all our major cultural institutions. While tilting against "privilege," they have succeeded in "privileging" their own world view to such an extent that "courage is now required to transgress the dictatorship of virtue."

Bernstein does not hold out much hope for many such manifestations of courage. Still there is a possibility that, by growing ever more intrusive and unreasonable, the new "dictators" may yet weaken rather than strengthen their political acceptance. In fact, several of Bernstein's anecdotes suggest that this may already be starting to happen.

Consider, for example, the aftermath of a 1989 decision by the Brookline, Massachusetts, high school to jettison its advanced-placement (AP) course in modern European history on the grounds that such a class was "incompatible with multiculturalism" and would give unfair advantage to the "privileged" youngsters (about 35) who took it each year.

Brookline, of course, is the prosperous Boston suburb that is home to Michael Dukakis. It is known for good schools. It is also one of the epicenters of political correctness, and its high-school curriculum, as Bernstein reports, has been multicultural in most respects since 1973.

Yet even in Brookline, it appears, a move to kill the most demanding and highest-status social-studies course in the high school was not lightly accepted. The decision naturally sat poorly with youngsters who wanted to take the class but could not. And it riled their parents. The ensuing battle raged for a year, until an obscure

state law was found that requires a school to offer a course if at least 30 students and their parents petition for it. The energized adolescents organized a successful signature drive and in time the school committee yielded—though not without adding an irksome new twist: henceforth, any student who took both the 10th-grade European-history course *and* the AP course was required also to take a class providing a "non-European, non-American perspective" as a condition for graduation.

The tale thus ends in just a partial victory. Yet it affords a basis for modest hope. Although the parent-student resistance in Brookline was not so much philosophical as self-interested, it was also clear-eyed and persistent. Similarly clear-eyed, it seemed to me, were my son's college classmates, disinclined as they were to let their own futures be shadowed by the goofier dispositions of the faculty. And so, too, are some of the recent immigrants profiled by Bernstein, keen that their children's opportunities not be limited by elite notions of what is good for them.

THOUGH we might prefer a George Orwell or a Sidney Hook to lead us out of the multicultural morass, we could do worse than find platoons of self-interested young people and their exasperated parents. They will need to work the levers of power, using the money they pay in term bills and taxes and the votes they cast for school boards and legislatures. But they are already getting a boost from talk-show hosts, a handful of politicians who have caught on, the manufacturers of bumper stickers, and the much-maligned "religious Right," which, unaccustomed as it may be to the role of protector of liberal values, turns out to be no trivial ally in the culture wars.

The young people I am imagining at the center of such an alliance may be self-absorbed, ill-schooled, and impulsive. But in just these qualities, as well as in their natural rebelliousness against authority and hostility to dogma, they might yet offer a counterweight to dictators, even those professing virtue.

Piano Man

A TALENT FOR GENIUS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF OSCAR LEVANT. BY SAM KASHNER AND NANCY SCHOENBERGER. Villard Books. 512 pp. \$25.00.

Reviewed by DANIEL J. SILVER

OSCAR LEVANT is remembered chiefly for two things: his recordings of classical piano music—particularly the works of his friend George Gershwin—and his appearances as a lovably neurotic sidekick in several movies, among which the musicals *An American in Paris* and *The Band Wagon* are probably the best known. But in his heyday in the 1940's, Levant was also among the most popular entertainers of his time, and one who helped to invent a new mode of celebrity.

Levant was born in Pittsburgh in 1906 to Russian-Jewish parents. His father was a watchmaker of rather stern though loving temperament. His mother was a lover of music, especially of the Romantic piano literature; she encouraged Levant to develop what she quickly perceived as a keen musical talent. Though his father wished him (and his brothers) to pursue a career in the professions, the restless young Oscar was not to be pinned down, and after his father's traumatizing, early death, he was left to follow his musical muse. His mother dreamed that he might have a concert career like that of her idol, the celebrated pianist Paderewski. In part Levant shared her ambition, but in part he wanted to be freed from her smothering musical ideals—as well as from the religious strictures of his Orthodox household.

Levant's musical career actually began in the dregs of show business, when, as a dropout at age fifteen, he moved to New York and took his first jobs as a "piano man" in speakeasies and roadhouses, entertaining the various bookies, hoods, pimps, prostitutes, and drunks who frequented them. This

DANIEL J. SILVER, an attorney in Washington, D.C., reviewed *Hole in Our Soul* by Martha Bayles in the August COMMENTARY.

was not exactly the career he was supposed to be cultivating; but Levant loved the crazy, spontaneous, demimonde life, a night-crawler's existence he was never to get out of his system.

By the 1930's Levant, having already mingled with many Tin Pan Alley songwriters, including the Gershwin brothers, had advanced from dives to the beginnings of a Broadway career. Throughout the 30's he built a steadily growing reputation as a composer, songwriter, and pianist. And he was also starting to make his real mark through chat in the hugely popular gossip columns, which talked him up as a "personality," among the wittiest and most outrageous partygoers and backstage *mavens* of both Hollywood and Broadway.

Starting in 1938, on the new radio quiz show, *Information, Please!*, Levant honed to perfection his art of repartee and packaged his personality as an entertainment vehicle. Though not the only talent on the show, he became its essential catalyst—the fascinating wag and "know-it-all" most people tuned in to hear. The show reached what was for the time the staggering figure of some twelve million listeners, and made Levant a household name.

Levant's first autobiographical book, *A Smattering of Ignorance*, was published in 1940, and immediately rose to the top of the best-seller list. So, too, when he was signed to a recording contract his albums became instant hits. He became one of the principal concert pianists of the 40's, eclipsed in adulation only by the very greatest performing artists, Vladimir Horowitz and Artur Schnabel. Inevitably, he began a movie career.

Until the demands of his newfound popularity made it too trying, Levant sought success not just as a performer but also as a composer of "serious" music in the new modernist idiom championed by Arnold Schoenberg. Indeed, he persuaded Schoenberg, then teaching at UCLA, to become his instructor in composition. Levant's work showed promise, but he could never fully commit himself to the discipline required by art music; be-

sides, playing other people's music—especially that of Gershwin, to whom he dedicated himself after Gershwin's early death—offered surer rewards.

By the early 50's, both Levant's career and his life were beginning to fall apart. He developed a growing addiction to painkillers, on top of his chain-smoking and incessant coffee binges; he suffered a heart attack; and eventually the strains of both his work schedule and his underlying personal insecurities

took their toll. By the mid-50's, obsessive-compulsive rituals and addictions unraveled whatever was left of a cloak of sanity, and he had become a frequent patient in mental hospitals.

Yet the resilient Levant began to use his sickness as material for a new kind of *shtick*, what might be called "confessional" humor. He did this on his own television talk show in Los Angeles and then, for a national audience, in appearances with Jack Paar. Levant's lack

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of inhibition about the formerly taboo subject of mental illness made these performances offputting or scary to some, but intriguing to many others. Encapsulating and recasting his experiences in book form in *The Memoirs of an Amnesiac* and *The Unimportance of Being Oscar*, Levant managed to hit the best-seller list twice again in his final creative brushes with fame. But he spent much of his last decade—he died at age sixty-five in 1972—sleeping incessantly, mired in despondency, wondering, like the rest of the world, what had happened to Oscar Levant.

SUCH is the basic outline of a rich, complex, and truly surprising life, told well by the husband-and-wife team of Sam Kashner and Nancy Schoenberger. Wrestling with a maddeningly paradoxical character, the authors manage to convey the twists of Levant's life with economy and skill, and to lend their tale a sense of coherence.

But here lies a problem: for the story they tell is a little *too* coherent. In essence, Kashner and Schoenberger's Levant is a remarkably talented man besieged from an early age by a sense of free-floating guilt, phobias galore, and crippling self-doubt. The authors make out Levant's life to be a painful, futile struggle of talent with self-destructiveness, with the latter ultimately winning out.

This is a plausible spin on Levant's life; in fact, it is his own spin, presented in mordantly comic form in his autobiographical books. But another spin is possible, one that would proceed not from the question of how such a talented man could be so crippled by doubt, but rather from the question of how a man so enfeebled by neurosis could accomplish so much.

Levant was certainly insecure, always feeling the sting of slights, often more imagined than real. And he suffered at times from awful stage fright. Yet he nevertheless enjoyed a fantastically successful concert career, and his apparently fragile ego was able to subordinate itself to that of a one-time rival, George Gershwin, who, he recognized, possessed the superior gift for melody.

And lest we be tempted to take Levant's disavowal of ambition as a serious composer for a sign of self-doubt, consider how he got to that point in the first place. Here was a largely self-taught pianist, without any formal training to speak of in the building blocks of harmony and orchestration. And yet this piano man and Broadway tunesmith had the nerve to approach Arnold Schoenberg, the most ascetic of the high modernists, to tutor him in the esoteric art of atonal composition. A strange kind of insecurity indeed.

It is a pity that the first full-length biography of Levant should not emphasize the more affirmative dimensions of his life. Today's readers, after all, are quite accustomed to stories of genius overwhelmed by madness and collapse, and do not need to be encouraged to find Levant's self-destructiveness more compelling than his accomplishments, his vitality, and the amazing range of his friends. This is all the more regrettable in that it obscures what is valuable and enduring in Levant's brand of confessional humor, unwittingly linking it with a comic style that by now has become an obnoxious affront to intelligence and wit.

By the 1980's, the comic mode to which Levant gave impetus, and whose practitioners ranged from Lenny Bruce to Woody Allen, had degenerated into self-indulgence and belligerence. "Angry" comics like Andrew Dice Clay and the late Sam Kinison; monologists like Spalding Gray and Eric Bogosian; "shock-radio" hosts like Don Imus and Howard Stern; and scatological performance artists like Karen Finley and Annie Sprinkle—all force their audiences to embrace their often insufferable eruptions of self in a kind of guerrilla theater in which the audience becomes an object of assault.

All this is a far cry from Levant, who regaled his audiences with jokes about his mental state and his addictions, but with no pretense of dragging others into his own maelstrom of self-destruction. Rather, Levant's wit, a continuation by other means of the smart-aleck persona cultivated by Jewish comics for a generation, was a way

of reconciling himself to his own contradictions. When, for instance, he referred to his Catholic second wife and their daughters as "the *goyim*," the point was to be funny and irreverent, but with the background understanding that he had no intention of sacrificing the family feeling he still held dear; the joke was really on himself. Or take this passage from *The Memoirs of an Amnesiac*:

I think the most awesome thing I ever said on television was in the spring of 1964 when Jack Paar asked me what I had wanted to be when I was a kid. I said that when I was a boy I told my father and mother, "I want to be an orphan." There was a delayed reaction in the audience—one of sheer, quiet horror.

At this point in his life—1964—Levant's awkwardness and insecurity, which once seemed a kind of lovable goofiness, had been twisted by mental and physical ravages into something ugly and monstrous. Yet in making a joke of it, he blamed no one but himself—his own insular intensity, his failure to define his feelings without kicking back at others, his own misunderstanding of human relationships. Others were simply invited to enjoy the performance.

A Talent for Genius, well-paced and written in an unobtrusive style, reacquaints us with a truly lively mind and an original and brilliant character, but covers them over too neatly with the coarse conventions of a lesser age.

The NASA Follies

THE HUBBLE WARS: ASTROPHYSICS MEETS ASTROPOLITICS IN THE TWO-BILLION-DOLLAR STRUGGLE OVER THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE. BY ERIC J. CHAISSON. HarperCollins. 386 pp. \$27.50.

Reviewed by KENNETH SILBER

IN DECEMBER 1993, American astronauts were sent to perform repairs on the orbiting Hubble Space Telescope and in so doing

KENNETH SILBER writes about technology and economics for *Insight* and other publications.

to mend the reputation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). With the Hubble mission successfully completed, NASA was able to recapture for a brief moment some of the glory that had attended the space program's early years before the onset of a series of highly publicized failures.

In truth, however, the results of the Hubble repair effort were more ambiguous than has been commonly realized. Some serious technical problems were not resolved, and even the improvements that were made involved complex trade-offs in which some of the telescope's capabilities were enhanced at the expense of others. Moreover, contrary to a widespread perception, Hubble was not entirely crippled prior to the repairs; the telescope, despite its flaws, had been gathering valuable scientific data.

If the public did not have an accurate appreciation of what was going on, much of the blame belongs to NASA itself. Beginning well before the telescope was launched in 1990, the agency had surrounded the Hubble project in a cloud of hype. Once the instrument was in orbit, NASA at first sought to downplay the growing technical problems and then, through sheer ineptitude, managed to overstate the extent of the flaws.

Throughout, NASA bombarded the public with inaccurate information, much of it reported uncritically by the press. Notably erroneous was the agency's repeated assertion that Hubble could peer seven times farther into the universe than ground-based telescopes—a claim devoid of meaning since terrestrial instruments currently detect objects near the edge of the observable universe, more than ten-billion light-years away. Any objects beyond that periphery are too distant for light from them to have reached the earth's vicinity in the current epoch, and thus are equally invisible to orbiting and ground-based telescopes.

In *The Hubble Wars*, astrophysicist Eric J. Chaisson provides a lucid exposition of the space telescope

and of the diverse celestial phenomena the instrument is designed to study, while at the same time presenting a personal memoir of his years as a senior scientist working on the Hubble project. Chaisson makes a compelling argument for Hubble's scientific value: the instrument may provide new insight into, among other things, the age, size, and fate of the universe. Yet politics looms as large as science in this book, and Chaisson roams freely across a

range of topics: the future of the nation's troubled space program; the media's shortcomings in reporting on science and technology; and the precarious status of the scientific community in a society that is becoming disinclined to pay for, or even pay attention to, large-scale research projects.

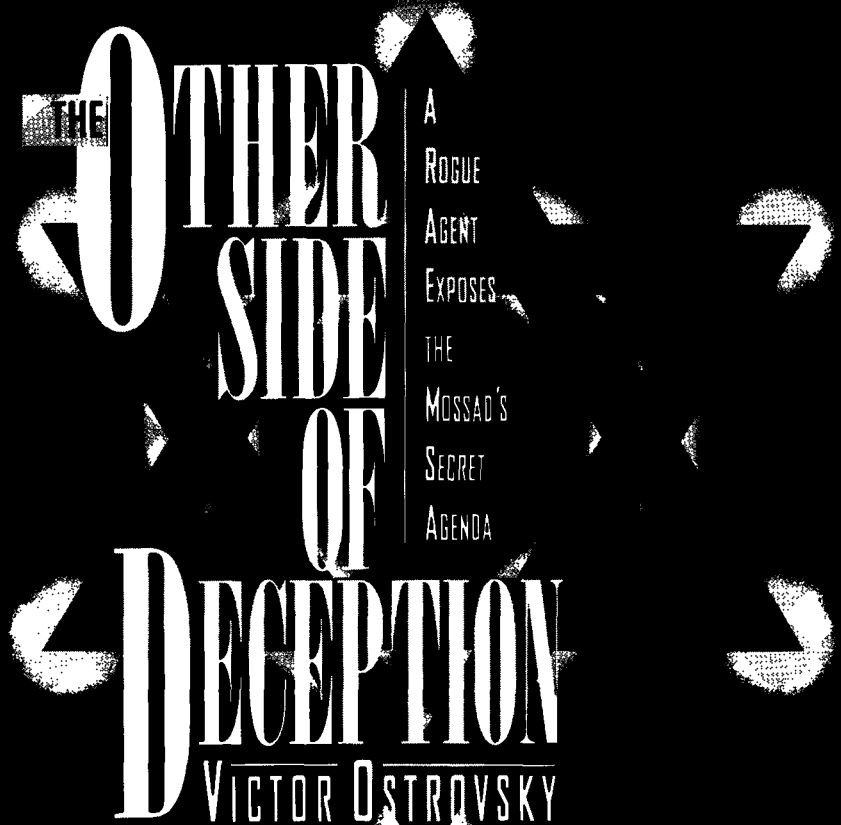
Chaisson worked until 1992 at the Space Telescope Science Institute, a consortium of universities that oversees the telescope's scientific activities. The Science Insti-

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tute was founded by NASA, under pressure from astronomers who mistrusted the emphasis on engineering feats rather than the scientific observation which had been apparent in previous space projects, including the Apollo moon missions. This tension between science and engineering intensified after Hubble was launched, as NASA engineers sought to conduct extensive tests upon the orbiting instrument while Science Institute researchers pushed for the telescope to be aimed at objects of scientific importance.

What is most striking about many of the bureaucratic battles Chaisson describes is their pettiness. NASA, in his telling, fiercely resisted sharing credit for Hubble's real or prospective achievements with the Science Institute or with the European Space Agency, which also participated in the project. A major point of contention involved, of all things, the logo that was to be displayed on materials released to the media. Exactly as the scientists feared, NASA demonstrated little understanding of scientific method. Once adverse publicity began to appear, agency officials demanded that the scientists immediately come up with a major astronomical discovery, as if such a thing could be delivered upon request.

YET *The Hubble Wars* is not a simple morality play of self-seeking bureaucrats versus dispassionate scientists. Even among the scientists themselves, Chaisson depicts a community riven by professional jealousies and intellectual insecurities, and he recounts scientific meetings that degenerated into hysterical shouting matches. A welfare-state mentality prevailed among some of the scientists, who regarded federal-research grants as an entitlement. And the project repeatedly was hindered by battles over access to the telescope's images. In a struggle Chaisson likens to that recently fought over the Dead Sea Scrolls, astronomers who had staked a proprietary claim to some part of the sky fought bitterly to delay the viewing of "their" celestial objects by competitors and the public.

The role that politicians played in the Hubble project was also far from inspiring. For the nation's leaders, the space telescope was little more than a vehicle for short-term political gain. Chaisson describes how the Bush White House established a back channel to the Science Institute in order to circumvent NASA's bureaucracy, but then quickly moved to distance itself from the Hubble project once things started to go wrong. Senator Barbara Mikulski, a strong supporter of the telescope, was one who seemed to understand Hubble's scientific importance. Yet at a press conference following the repair mission, when asked by a reporter why the public should care about the telescope, she lamely replied, "Jobs," thus rekindling fears that the project was merely pork for the aerospace industry. Some politicians found ways to profit from NASA's stumbles. Congressional hearings, for example, gave then-Senator Albert Gore a highly visible platform from which to grandstand while self-righteously grilling NASA officials on Hubble's flaws.

ABSORPTION in the telescope's activities made life at the Science Institute peculiarly insular. When, Chaisson reports, he finally noticed in late 1990 that the United States was sending troops to the Persian Gulf, his chief concern was that media attention would be diverted from the interesting data Hubble was beginning to compile. Chaisson also notes, correctly, that the war resulted in a reversal of the respective public images of NASA and the military. In sharp contrast to the 1960's and 70's, the Defense Department now took on the mantle of technological heroism while NASA, with its defective telescope, was dismissed as incompetent or worse.

There is much to confirm this revised assessment. *The Hubble Wars* provides a fascinating look, for example, at the uneasy interplay between NASA and the military/intelligence officials responsible for spy satellites. In Chaisson's telling, those on the "dark side" of the nation's space activities had overcome various techni-

cal hurdles well in advance of their civilian counterparts, and some of Hubble's problems could have been avoided by a greater sharing of information. (At one point, in a clear display of superior engineering, a spy satellite zoomed by to photograph the ailing Hubble telescope.)

Altogether, *The Hubble Wars* presents a broad and searing indictment of NASA. This is a book about problems, not solutions—although Chaisson advocates that NASA be thoroughly reformed or replaced, his recommendations are sketched rather briefly. But the light he shines is much needed, powerfully illuminating why the space program seems to belong more and more to the past and less and less to the future.

Barren

MOTHERHOOD DEFERRED: A WOMAN'S JOURNEY. BY ANNE TAYLOR FLEMING. Putnam. 256 pp. \$23.95.

Reviewed by RACHEL ABRAMS

ANNE Taylor Fleming is a freelance writer who reports regularly about women and their "issues" for the *New York Times Magazine*, among other journals. In this, her first book, she clinically details her own unsuccessful struggle to conceive a child, and also chronicles her coming-of-age as a feminist. Mrs. Fleming's account of her life, particularly her love affair with feminism, is the saga, writ small, of a good number of other women as well, some of whom figure prominently in our culture.

Mrs. Fleming begins her narrative at the end of her "journey," in the sterile embrace of a gynecological apparatus during one of countless failed attempts to become impregnated. Thereafter she alternates back and forth, chapter by chapter, interspersing the story of her life with the story of her doomed effort to conceive.

She was born in Hollywood in

RACHEL ABRAMS has written for COMMENTARY, the Wall Street Journal, and the American Spectator.

1950, the younger of two daughters of actors, both of whom worked regularly. Her father appeared in movies and her mother in television. She and her sister were given all the usual upper-middle-class advantages: they attended private schools, and were asked only to excel at whatever it was they chose to do. Even the divorce of her parents, as she describes it, was comparatively pain-free: "My parents . . . divorced with rare grace and we were never batted around between them or made pawns in any leftover business of theirs." After the divorce, each of her parents continued to dote on her, to encourage her, to help her grow up.

The young Anne Taylor tanned herself at the beach and, like many quasi-intellectual girls of her class and generation, wrote "rebellious" poetry in school. Some of this pathetic stuff she quotes here, as she does many of her other writings, quite without irony. Of one such effort, she says in all seriousness:

I submitted a love poem to the school literary magazine about a white girl and a black boy being forced apart "by those all-knowing people, those omnipotent bodies of society, who would not let me be of him or him of me."

When she was sixteen, Anne Taylor met Karl Fleming, a married writer twice her age and the father of four sons. Before she had even begun to make her way in the world, he had divorced his wife and swept her off her feet with a declaration of undying passion. After she graduated from high school in 1967, they shared a bed in various spots up and down the California coast while she went to college in Santa Cruz, and then married shortly after she graduated. This period coincided with the social and political upheavals of the late 60's and early 70's, but for her these were filtered through a husband's loving and indulgent care. Unlike most of the women of her acquaintance—unlike, indeed, a great many women of her class and generation—Mrs. Fleming married (and remains married to) her first and only sexual partner.

Nevertheless, she eagerly lapped

up the words of the revolutionary women writers who rose to prominence in this period. As an aspiring writer herself, she had been laboring, she now says, under constraints imposed by authors of the opposite sex like Hemingway and Fitzgerald, "who could put an elegantly tight-lipped spin on their monstrous male sentimentality, leaving women authors, it seemed, in the sweet domestic dust to write about tea parties and village romances." (So much for Jane Austen and George Eliot.) Eventually, though, she discovered women who could speak to her. One of them was Simone de Beauvoir: "I wanted to follow her into the sunset," she says of Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* compelled her just as much:

That's where my friends and I were adamantly heading—beyond biology, away from the home, that comfortable concentration camp, away from motherhood and dishes and diapers. . . . Not for us the traditional

wifely role. No way were we going to be buried alive. We would sign on and help shape the future with our new licensed ambitions.

Fortunately for the young Mrs. Fleming, there was a whole slew of these writers, of whom Beauvoir and Friedan were actually the primmest. Even the outrageous Germaine Greer, who called "normal" girls "female faggots," was sedate by comparison with the contributors to a 1970 anthology, *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, which Mrs. Fleming hails as "vibrantly vitriolic" and which contained chapter titles like "Media Images 2: Body Odor and Social Order"; "The Politics of Orgasm"; and "Notes of a Radical Lesbian." She smiles indulgently over some of this now; but, she adds,

it was dazzlingly potent stuff back then, exciting, daring, conscripting—if you were young and female and well placed, by dint of economics and education, to take advantage of all these feminist exhortations.

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SOCIAL ISSUES

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Supreme Court Decisions on Church-State Relationships

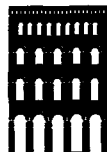
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AND yet, and yet. Such, it appears, is the universal pull of biology that even Simone de Beauvoir at the end of her life bitterly regretted her childlessness, and Betty Friedan, too, who after all had had three children when she sat down to repudiate motherhood, eventually inclined to a more temperate view. And so, around about the mid-1980's, Mrs. Fleming, by now in her middle thirties, commenced to notice that, try as she might, she too was unable to resist the impulse of nature. "I began to flirt with the possibility" of children, she writes,

began to relax toward it, toward the idea of creation and procreation and family and the feeling that a baby might just be a balm to my frazzled, divided, angry, Reagan-era female soul.

The words are preposterous, but Mrs. Fleming's desire for pregnancy was genuine enough. Yet it was not to be. A variety of conditions, including difficulties she may have inherited from her mother, some sexually transmitted dis-

ease she may have contracted from her husband, and maybe even the simple fact that she had waited so long, seems to have conspired against her becoming pregnant through the usual means. And so began a tortuous period of regular intercourse with medical equipment.

For the reader, the story of Mrs. Fleming's increasingly desperate submission to a series of fantastically high-tech interventions are of passing interest; after a while, these experiments with their various acronyms begin to run together on the page. Yet every encounter with a syringe, a petrie dish, a scanner, and a stirrup, each drop of sperm in the seemingly endless stream supplied by her obliging husband, then washed and counted and mounted via laparoscope, every failure of every mechanically fertilized embryo to implant itself in her uterus, Mrs. Fleming faithfully, one is tempted to say lovingly, records.

To the inevitable question, why not adopt?, Mrs. Fleming answers that she did not, does not, want a

baby she has not produced herself, and bearing her genetic code. In her fantasies, her offspring is an adolescent girl bearing an uncanny resemblance to her own lovely, California, sunstreaked, lithe, adolescent self.

Is THERE something more to all this than simple narcissism? In a revealing passage, Mrs. Fleming remarks:

So having a baby wasn't just having a baby. It became a major healing. That is part of the reason I felt so bereft when pregnancy continued to elude me. I was denied that particular kind of healing, and so set me out on this literary kind instead.

But what ill is it, exactly, that she needs to heal? Throughout her narrative, Mrs. Fleming threads the life histories of some of her friends: women who have experienced pain, or difficulty, or even tragedy. She bleeds for these women, yet, astonishingly, she sees no difference between their lives and her own—the pleasant, rich, easy life she describes in this very book. To the contrary, she reserves her densest and most breathlessly girlish prose for her own story, and sheds her biggest tears over her own pain. The fact that she is able to dismiss the love and devotion lavished upon her by her parents and her husband as so much smoke and ashes—and as typifying the tragedy of a whole generation—suggests a mindset for which narcissism seems altogether too narrow a term.

As the self-appointed standard-bearer for her cohort of well-heeled, well-groomed, self-absorbed, self-obsessed, dissatisfied, unsatisfiable women, Mrs. Fleming gives away a lot. In their youth, she writes, "we were the golden girls of the brave new order. We would do it differently, redefine the gender, fly free of our very own sex." Such, at any rate, was the fashion of the day. But now there is a new fashion. Where once the goal of life was to shed the old conventions, now the goal has to do with "healing." Everyone is doing it; and so Mrs. Fleming and her friends, too, will heal, if not by having babies (a "particular kind of heal-

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ing") then by writing books ("the literary kind instead"). Whatever.

Only, do not force them to rethink. At one point, Mrs. Fleming pauses to ask herself:

Could I in good conscience blame feminism for my long abstinence from motherhood . . . those angry, childless and unmarried ideologues of yore who had played their part in my long resistance to motherhood?

But almost before the question is raised she has already answered in the negative. "I knew in my heart of hearts that they had also given me a life, washing me out into the world on the tidal wave of their rage."

Needless to say, neither here nor anywhere else in this book does she trouble to ask whether, "in good conscience," she can blame *herself*. And so, when she comes to tender her apologies—"Sorry. Sorry. Sorry."—to all those "station-wagon moms with their post-partum pounds who felt denigrated in the liberationist heyday by the young, lean, ambitious women like me who were so intent on making our way," somehow it is hard to believe she means it. It is even more difficult to accept her apology.

What Happened to CCNY

CITY ON A HILL: TESTING THE AMERICAN DREAM AT CITY COLLEGE. BY JAMES TRAUB. Addison-Wesley. 371 pp. \$25.00.

Reviewed by BARRY R. GROSS

IN ITS glory years, 1920 to 1970, New York's City College (CCNY) provided free education to a student body composed largely of the children of poor and working-class immigrants, many of them Jews. From this material the "Harvard of the Proletariat," as CCNY was known, produced generations of highly educated, upper-middle-class professionals along with eight Nobel laureates and a host of distinguished scholars and intellectu-

BARRY R. GROSS has, for more than a quarter-century, taught philosophy and, on occasion, remedial reading at York College, CUNY.

als (among them Sidney Hook, Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Irving Howe, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Alfred Kazin).

The times, and City College, have changed. Today, those of its students who manage to earn a diploma are often barely educated; the college, in fact, must labor intensively to produce any graduates at all. In two words, James Traub's book explains what happened: open enrollment. That policy, hastily begun under intense political pressure in 1971, allows any high-school graduate, regardless of ability or accomplishment, a place in one of the seventeen undergraduate branches of the City University of New York (CUNY) whose battered flagship is City College.

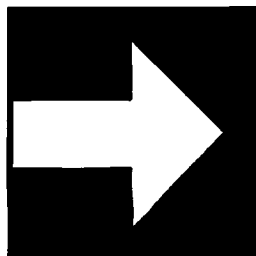
Open enrollment has often been criticized, most famously—if ambivalently—by a former City College dean, Theodore L. Gross, who was fired for his pains.* But Traub's book has a different slant. Traub, who attended the real Harvard and who writes for the *New Yorker*, came to the topic of open enroll-

ment as an outsider. In writing *City on a Hill*, he sat in on entire semesters of regular and remedial classes, hung around the CCNY campus, and kept up with a number of students and teachers over several academic terms.

Traub is a gifted and sympathetic storyteller, and his portrait of campus life is gently drawn. Although he occasionally pulls punches, and although he embraces various liberal nostrums, his book leads, willy-nilly, to devastating conclusions, showing to all but the willfully blind that no college has the power to transform individuals socially and intellectually who lack that power themselves.

In the course of *City on the Hill*, Traub takes the reader through class after class of usually appealing, sometimes sullen, often bewildered, almost always deficient students. These students are ill-equipped not just for a particular class

* See Peter Shaw's review of *Academic Turmoil* by Theodore L. Gross in COMMENTARY, May 1980.



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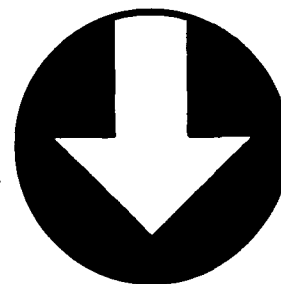
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"N"

or subject, but for learning in general. Most lack all notion of how to study or even the ability to read and write. They are unfamiliar with ideas and puzzled in their presence. These deficiencies are due to appallingly poor prior education and to the students' chaotic lives on the social and economic margin.

Another reason why even the best at City College are so bad is that open enrollment, remarkably, guarantees entrance to students who cannot read, write, or speak English at all, and some of these students appear to have a shaky grip on their native languages as well. Traub reports that two-thirds of the students enrolled in English

as a Second Language (ESL) drop out of such courses before entering the regular curriculum. And few of those who complete ESL courses, or the courses in elementary reading and writing in CCNY's euphemistically-named "college-skills" program, are likely to be able to absorb even what passes for a college-level education at City College today.

Is there anything to be done about this particular problem? Traub appears taken with some of the grandiose claims made on behalf of "composition scholarship" and with CCNY's "fluency-first" approach to teaching English. Its method is: simply get students to scribble or talk—and grammar, syntax, and diction be damned. Fortunately, Traub's affection for these pedagogical fashions does not keep him from honestly presenting their results. Here is his report on three students subjected to City College's most up-to-date language-teaching techniques:

[Hammeed] . . . had been in New York for eighteen months, and in that time he had acquired a version of English that was a parody of the fluency-first ideal. He stammered explosively, . . . and rather than pause to get things right in his head he simply talked without stopping or even breathing. He was almost completely incomprehensible, although once your ear got used to the violent cascade of his language you could begin to pick up some sense. Hammeed also misunderstood the simplest words. Sandra and Yaffa, on the other hand, didn't speak at all; they knew almost no English. When . . . [the teacher] asked the students to write, . . . they were simply lost. . . . Sandra kept her pen poised above her notebook; she wanted to write, but nothing made any sense to her.

Traub is especially disappointing on the whole issue of academic standards. He lavishes praise, for example, on CUNY Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds's College Preparatory Initiative as a bold attempt to hold entering freshmen to standards. But the "initiative" merely recommends strengthening the *high-school* curriculum, and makes

it plain that students who do not take and pass high-school math and science courses will still be admitted. This policy parallels other examples of laxity, like the ESL faculty's abandonment of a writing-assessment test on the grounds that it was too difficult for the students to pass. Everywhere the pattern is the same: when students fail to meet standards, the college abandons them behind a cloud of smoke.

Perhaps Traub's difficulty here has to do with his notion that achieving equality of opportunity, which of course he favors, somehow involves a trade-off with standards. "I wasn't sure how much equal opportunity I was willing to sacrifice in order to raise the standards," he writes. But, as every page of this book powerfully shows, lowering standards does not—cannot—create meaningful equality of opportunity; it only produces dismal results.

Adherence to standards, in fact, explains why the only part of CCNY that functions reasonably well is its engineering school. As Traub points out, engineering students account for an astonishing one-quarter to one-third of the 1,200 students in a City College graduating class. (The humanities together provide just 50 graduates, and all of the sciences just another 60.) The engineering school succeeds by admitting only well-prepared students, working them hard, and holding them to the standards that prevail in the best schools in the country. But Traub misses the lesson here. He is so mesmerized, it seems, by the social role a college education can play that he forgets that social mobility is a desirable but secondary effect of college; its primary goal is, or ought to be, education.

And Traub never mentions what his book clearly shows to be the greatest cost of open enrollment: the by-now irreversible destruction of City College, and indeed of CUNY, as learning institutions. For even in the unlikely event that today's academic and political leaders were to muster the courage to admit the emperor has no clothes, little would be likely to change. Open enrollment has brought in a huge cadre of counselors, adminis-

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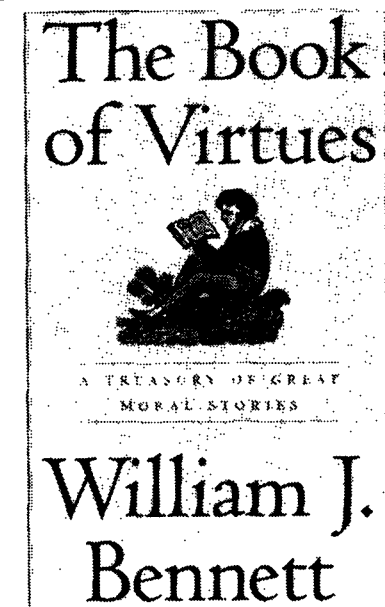
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trators, and teachers—many tenured—whose careers depend wholly upon remedial students. Allied as they are with “progressive” ideologues and politicians, they would be next to impossible to dislodge, and they have the power to scotch any serious attempts at reform.

City on a Hill does not confine itself to curricular matters alone, but also delves into campus politics. Thus, although CCNY has a highly—not to say gloriously—diverse student body, Traub explodes the myth that it is a seething racial cauldron. In all the many months he spent on campus he found little racial activism and less animosity. Like students elsewhere, most City College students just want to get on with their careers and graduate.

On the other hand, the professors—or at least some of them—are worse in this respect than the students. Traub pulls no punches in portraying Leonard Jeffries,

chairman of City College’s black-studies department, as a charismatic street thug whose lack of scholarly credentials, incompetent classroom routines, and abuse of students should have led to his ouster long ago. Courageously, Traub attended some of Jeffries’s classes, where he took menacing guff for his pains.

Ever fair-minded, Traub tries to balance CCNY’s long toleration of Jeffries by noting its allegedly similar toleration of Michael Levin, a philosophy professor whose views on the relationship between race and intelligence have stirred a good deal of controversy. But the parallel Traub draws is false. City College in fact exhibited little tolerance toward Levin; it did its best to get rid of him. And unlike Jeffries, who has no scholarly writings to his credit, Levin is a competent philosopher whose writings command attention in the profession. Levin also kept his controversial

views off-campus and out of the classroom, where they remained until Dean Paul Sherwin, whom Traub praises extravagantly, made them widely known and invited Levin’s students to drop his courses. All this is in the record of Levin’s successful suit against CUNY.

DESPITE this book’s shortcomings, Traub tells City College’s baneful story extremely well. To his credit, moreover, he does draw many if not all the inferences to which his observations compel him, even if he draws them *molto sotto voce*. Lively, well-written, even exciting to read, *City on a Hill*, with its graphic, accurate, and sympathetic description of just what goes on in and out of classes at City College, is better than a hundred jeremiads. Whatever its flaws, and perhaps in spite of Traub’s own intentions, it reveals an educational nightmare from which we will not soon awake.

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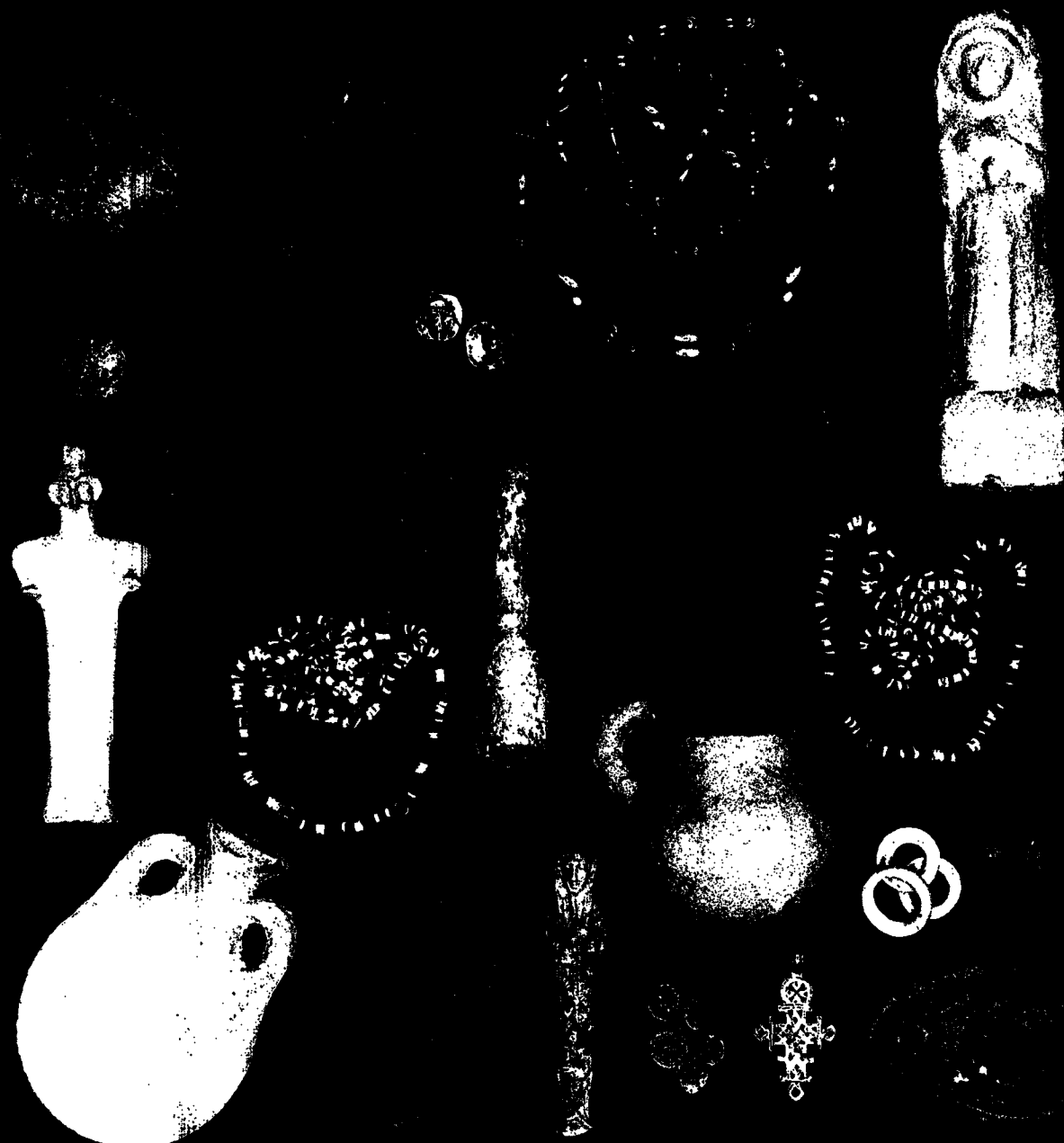
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